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REMINISCENCES

OF

SCOTTISH LIFE AND CHARACTER,

BY

E. B. RAMSAY, M.A., LL.D., F.R.S.E.,

DEAN OF EDINBURGH.

FROM THE LAST EDINBURGH EDITION.

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

TO

THE AMERICAN EDITION.

THE firm of Messrs. TICKNOR & FIELDS having arranged to bring out an American edition of my "Reminiscences of Scottish Life and Character," I may perhaps without intrusion be allowed to prefix a few words to express the deep and sincere gratification which this proposed republication has afforded me.

The mere probability of there being a demand for an American reprint of such a book is of itself a sufficient proof that Scotland, with its many humorous and characteristic associations, still retains its hold upon the affections of many of our transatlantic brethren. I rejoice to think that the "Land o' Cakes" is remembered with interest in the great Republic; and I have not words to express the satisfaction which I derive from the thought of contributing to the amusement of American citizens who feel kindly towards Scotland and Scottish reminiscences.

No doubt there must be many families, and many individuals scattered throughout the Union, who, from ties of kindred or from their own recollections, will feel their hearts glow with emotion when they hear old Scottish stories of the last half century. In a distant land, and amidst very different scenes

and habits of life, such persons will delight to be reminded or informed of quaint sayings and eccentric doings, connected with the past humorists of Scotland in all ranks of society — with her original and strong-minded old ladies — her excellent and simple parish ministers — her amusing parochial half daft idiots — her pawky lairds, and her old-fashioned and now obsolete domestic servants and retainers.

I have always myself felt a deep interest in the United States of America, and delighted to mark their advancement and progress. I have enjoyed for many years past the society of travellers from the States, both lay and clerical, when visiting the striking and beautiful Scottish metropolis; and I now commit to the kind indulgence of my American friends and brethren these reminiscences of a country to which many of them must look with a warm interest as to an ancient and honoured land with which their own personal or ancestral feelings are inseparably and kindly associated.

E. B. RAMSAY.

Edinburgh, October 12, 1860.

To the Most Honourable

JAMES ANDREW MARQUIS OF DALHOUSIE

K.T., P.C., &c. &c.

My Dear Lord Dalhousie,

I beg permission to dedicate to you in its more enlarged form, a collection of national peculiarities which has grown up to many times the size of the original lecture with which it commenced. I am quite conscious that the only claim which this work can have either to the notice of my countrymen, or to any share of attention from your Lordship, consists in this — that it is conversant with a class of anecdotes peculiar to Scotland *— that it may tend to illustrate a species of humour exclusively* Scottish. *The object is to fix and preserve a page of our domestic national annals which, in the eyes of the rising generation, is fast fading into oblivion.*

I am happy to take any opportunity of acknowledging

that the long friendship of one so able, so high minded, and so illustrious, as the Marquis of Dalhousie, has been amongst the most honourable and gratifying incidents of a life not now a short one. But my present purpose is rather to present my book to a Scottish nobleman who has a full relish for a Scottish story, and this taste, in yourself, I know to be a hereditary one, for your distinguished father, the late Earl of Dalhousie, was a thorough Scotchman, and in regard to such anecdotes as those which I have endeavoured to collect, we may say of him (to borrow a homely expression from the worthy Bailie Nicol Jarvie), that "he liket ane o' them weel, honest man!"

I am, with much respect and regard,

Your Lordship's affectionate friend,

E. B. RAMSAY.

AINSLIE PLACE, EDINBURGH,
May, 1860.

PREFACE TO THE SEVENTH EDITION.

IN the Sixth Edition of the "REMINISCENCES OF SCOTTISH LIFE AND CHARACTER" a considerable number of fresh anecdotes were introduced from various sources, whilst some of those already adopted were corrected. In further illustration of the *drinking system*, now fortunately obsolete in Scottish society, some details were given regarding the *toasts* and sentiments which were once considered a necessary appendage to every festive board, public or private. In the sixth edition, also, I was enabled to introduce some Scottish reminiscences by an esteemed friend — the Rev. Dr. Clason. No one was better qualified for such an office; and I feel confident that my readers have considered his contribution as one of the most interesting and important parts of the volume.

It has been one of the most pleasing results of the favour with which this work has been received by my countrymen, that it has called forth, for edition after edition, so many kind communications from various quarters. Regarding the contributions sent to me for insertion, my rule has been to omit every story which I conceived might possibly give offence, whether from hurting the feelings of surviving relatives, trespassing upon

delicacy and moral propriety, or trenching upon the reverence due to sacred things. I have also made it a condition that my anecdotes should possess an essentially *Scottish* character, and that they should illustrate some phase of Scottish manners. These reasons have excluded many stories, some of which are popular and familiar, and some less generally known. I hope I have not offended against my own laws. I have endeavoured to preserve the right course in this matter of selection. I know that from some one or other of the above reasons, or from several combined, I have omitted stories which, in point and humour, I consider among our best.

Many anecdotes, however, have been inserted from various correspondents, and many suggestions have been adopted. Still there remain a great quantity of contributions, from which, no doubt, interesting materials could be selected; and these I purpose to embody in a *Supplement*, as a work separate from the present volume, but arranged under the same heads, of religious feelings, conviviality, domestics, language and proverbs, wit and humour.

From the numerous communications which I have received. it is quite evident that the field of inquiry for such reminiscences is very extensive, and I am convinced is far from being yet exhausted. But I fear the labourers are growing few. We are constantly hearing of the death of some person, who, it is said, was possessed of a rich store of original Scottish anecdotes, which have not been recorded. I would therefore take this opportunity of soliciting, for the proposed supplemental volume, contributions from those who are interested in the subject, and who have, especially, experience in the dialect and humour of the *west* of Scotland, and of those districts with which I have less acquaintance. My intercourse has chiefly been confined to the Forfar, Kincardine, and Aberdeen districts of the country. I would further suggest, for the consideration of those who may be kindly disposed to contribute materials towards a supplementary volume, that notices of *customs* and *practices* now ob-

solete, which they can remember to have prevailed in society — like those communicated by Dr. Clason — would be a valuable and interesting addition to the volume.

In calling the attention of my countrymen to their native Scottish dialect, with all its force and humour, I would again remind them of the uncertainty which hangs over the question of right *spelling*. There is no uniform rule or practice for our guidance. We can only follow the practice of those who are considered as of highest authority amongst Scottish writers. Amongst these, however, will be found differences of spelling. Kelly's work on Scottish Proverbs has always been held in high estimation for its correctness. But he does not seem to have been sufficiently careful to correct the proof sheets, as there are many typographical errors in his book. From these causes the Scotch spelling of a modern author may be found fault with, not because he has committed an error, but because he has followed a different authority from his critic. Thus, in my own case, a friendly reviewer of this work has objected to the story at page 163, line sixth, of Sixth Edition, that "'*had in*' is a mistake in Scotch for 'hauld in.'" But for "had," I may quote the high authority of Allan Ramsay's "Gentle Shepherd." I select two passages from several to the same effect:—

"Sir *William*, like a warlock, with a beard
Five nives in length, and white
As driven snaw,
Amang us came, cry'd — *Had ye merry a'*.

"I'm happy now! o'er happy!
Had my head;
This gush of pleasure's like to be
My dead."[1]

[1] *Poems by Allan Ramsay.* 2 vols., 4to. Edinburgh, 1728. Vol. ii., pages 355, 349.

may also refer to local usage. The expression belongs to an Angus story, and let me further remark, that although (as I am quite aware) "haud in" is pure classical Scotch, yet that in my country the constant pronunciation familiar to my early "reminiscences," was — "had east," or "had wast," "had in," etc., pronounced short, as if written "*hadd*."

The portion of this work devoted to our proverbial expressions has been carefully revised, and it is with no small gratification that I have to acknowledge the honour of having received suggestions in this department from two such accomplished scholars as Lord Neaves and Dr. Hannah. I am desirous of again taking the opportunity of expressing how much I owe to the valuable and judicious assistance of Mr. David Douglas, of the firm of Edmonston and Douglas, publishers. His accurate knowledge of Scotch has been most serviceable in correcting the press, especially in the quotations from the older writers on Scottish proverbs.

For such persons as may still feel an interest in a language which is now fast passing away, I am convinced the best mode of obtaining a correct knowledge of the Scottish words and phraseology, which constituted the pure dialect of an older generation, is to study Jamieson's Dictionary. The progress of time seems only to bring forth more clearly the great research, the varied learning, and the accurate discrimination, of this remarkable national work.

Reminiscences of Scottish Life and Character.

INTRODUCTION.

MANY things connected with the Scottish manners of former times are fast becoming obsolete, and we seem at present to be placed in a juncture when some Scottish traditions may be lost entirely, if not now preserved. Being impressed with this truth, I made my own "Reminiscences of Scottish Life and Character" the subject of a lecture, which was delivered as one of the series given at Ulbster Hall in 1850 by different contributors, some of whom were amongst the most distinguished of our citizens. The idea met with so much approval, that the lecture was published. Since that time the materials have been growing under my hand, and I received many contributions on the subject, which were soon embodied in a second edition. The public interest continued, and brought forth many flattering and

pleasing communications from various quarters; and I would here express how deeply I have been gratified by the sympathy with which my humble endeavours to exhibit a phase of Scottish social life have been received. I still think that it forms a most interesting chapter of our *domestic national* annals. In fact, if it were not presumption, I might be inclined to consider myself a fellow-labourer with Mr. Robert Chambers; as in a very humble degree, and in a very limited sphere, this little volume takes a portion of the same field of illustration which he has selected. I should consider myself to have done well if I shall direct any of my readers to his able volumes. Whosoever wishes to know what this country really has been in times past, and to learn with a precision beyond what is supplied by the narratives of history, the details of the ordinary current of our social, civil, and national life, must carefully study the "Domestic Annals of Scotland." Never before were a nation's domestic features so thoroughly portrayed. Of those features the specimens of quaint Scottish humour still remembered are unlike anything else, but they are fast becoming obsolete, and my motive for this publication has been an endeavour to preserve marks of the past, which would of themselves soon become obliterated, and to supply the rising generation with pictures of social life, faded and indistinct to their eyes, but the strong lines of which an older race still remember. By thus coming forward at a favourable moment, no

doubt many beautiful specimens of SCOTTISH MINSTRELSY have in this manner been preserved from oblivion by the timely exertions of Bishop Percy, Ritson, Walter Scott, and Professor Aytoun. Lord Macaulay, in his preface to "The Lays of Ancient Rome," shows very powerfully the tendency of all that lingers in the memory to become obsolete, and he does not hesitate to say that "Sir Walter Scott was but *just in time* to save the precious relics of the minstrelsy of the Border."

We have just received a testimony to the value of our Scottish language from the illustrious Chancellor of the University of Edinburgh, the force and authority of which no one will be disposed to question. Lord Brougham, in speaking of improvements upon the English language, makes these striking remarks: —

"The pure and classical language of Scotland must on no account be regarded as a provincial dialect, any more than French was so regarded in the reign of Henry V., or Italian in that of the first Napoleon, or Greek under the Roman Empire. Nor is it to be in any manner of way considered as a corruption of the Saxon; on the contrary, it contains much of the old and genuine Saxon, with an intermixture from the Northern nations, as Danes and Norse, and some, though a small portion, from the Celtic. But in whatever way composed, or from whatever sources arising, it is a national language, used by the whole people in their early years, by many learned and gifted persons throughout life, and in which are written the laws of the Scotch, their judicial proceedings, their ancient history, above all, their poetry.

"There can be no doubt that the English language would

greatly gain by being enriched with a number both of words and of phrases, or turns of expression, now peculiar to the Scotch. It was by such a process that the Greek became the first of tongues, as well written as spoken. . . . . .

"Would it not afford means of enriching and improving the English language, if full and accurate glossaries of improved Scotch words and phrases — those successfully used by the best writers, both in prose and verse — were given, with distinct explanation and reference to authorities? This has been done in France and other countries, where some dictionaries accompany the English, in some cases with Scotch synonymes, in others with varieties of expression." *Installation Address*, p. 63.

My esteemed friend, Lord Neaves, who, it is well known, combines, with his great legal knowledge and high literary acquirements, a keen sense of the humorous, has sometimes pleasantly complained of my drawing so many of my specimens of Scottish humour from sayings and doings of Scottish ministers. There can be no doubt that the older school of our national clergy supply some most amusing anecdotes. They were a shrewd and observant race. They lived amongst their own people from year to year, and knew well the Scottish type of character. Their retired habits and familiar intercourse with their parishioners, gave rise to many quaint and racy communications. They were excellent men, well suited to their pastoral work, and did much good amongst their congregations; for it should be always remembered that a national church requires a sympathy and resemblance between the pastors and the flocks. Both will be found to

change together. Nothing could be further from my mind in recording these stories, than the idea of casting ridicule upon such an order of men. My own feelings as a Scotchman, with all their ancestral associations, lead me to cherish their memory with pride and deep interest. I may appeal also to the fact that many contributions to this volume are voluntary offerings from distinguished clergymen of the Church of Scotland, as well as of the Free Church and of other Presbyterian communities. Indeed, no persons enjoy these stories more than ministers themselves. I recollect many years ago travelling to Perth in the old stage-coach days, and enjoying the society of a Scottish clergyman, who was a most amusing companion, and full of stories, the quaint humour of which accorded with his own disposition. When we had come through Glen Farg, my companion pointed out that we were in the parish of Dron. With much humour he introduced an anecdote of a brother minister not of a brilliant order of mind, who had terminated in this place a course of appointments in the Church, the names of which, at least, were of an ominous character for a person of unimaginative temperament. The worthy man had been brought up at the school of *Dunse* — had been made assistant at *Dull*, a parish near Aberfeldy, in the Presbytery of Weem, and had here ended his days and his clerical career as minister of *Dron*.

Sir Walter Scott, in the dedication to the King (George the Fourth) of his collected edition of the

Waverley Novels, views with much complacency the fact that "the perusal of them has been supposed, in some instances, to have succeeded in amusing hours of relaxation, or relieving those of languor, pain, or anxiety." No doubt it is a source of allowable satisfaction to an author to think that he has in any degree, even the lowest and most humble, contributed to the innocent recreation of a world where sorrow and distress so generally prevail. The work of preparing these Reminiscences has sometimes succeeded in drawing off the mind of the author from sad and painful recollections of his own domestic trials, and he may perhaps be permitted to state, that in several cases he has received assurance that these pages have beguiled an hour of languor and debility; that they have recalled many pleasant associations with the past, and have given a permanent and agreeable impression of a pleasantry and humour exclusively and essentially of a Scottish type and character.

I wish it to be distinctly understood that these desultory records were never intended to treat of the changes which have taken place amongst us during the last half century, in literature or philosophy, in laws, commerce, manufactures, or in the deeper phases of our national character. I treat of changes and of transitions which lie rather upon the surface of social life. In fact, I speak of what, to a great degree, I can verify from my own experience — what I have not seen and known in my own person

I generally narrate from the *direct* testimony of others. I can myself go back in memory for fifty years; and therefore these observations, trivial and superficial as they may be, I might name, in imitation of my distinguished great-great-great-uncle, Bishop Burnett, and call them "Memoirs of my own Time," or, more correctly, to follow a recent example of collected reminiscences (that of the late lamented Lord Cockburn), "Memorials of my Time." I have recorded the remarks following in the way of an *experiment*, hoping that it might form a precedent or example for others to take up the question of changes amongst us, and for those to state results of their observation who have had far more experience than I have (as I was only an occasional visitor to my own country from the age of eight to the age of thirty), who have more opportunities of judging, and who are possessed of far better powers of description. As Lord Cockburn has observed, "A change has been going on for a long time" "The feelings and habits which had prevailed at the Union, and which had left so many picturesque peculiarities on the Scottish character, could not survive the enlarged intercourse with England and the world." Much of this change had of course taken place before any of the present generation can remember. Much has been done in my own recollection, and now there remains only comparatively the slighter shades of difference to be assimilated, and soon there will be little to notice.

Now, a subject like this can only be illustrated by a copious application of anecdotes which must show the features of the past. And let me premise that I make use of anecdotes not for the purpose of telling a good story, but solely in the way of *illustration*. I am quite certain that there was an originality, a dry and humorous mode of viewing persons and events quite *peculiar* to the older Scottish characters. And I am equally certain, that their peculiar humour can only be exhibited in examples. I have just been supplied by two much valued and kind friends, with anecdotes highly illustrative of what I have endeavoured to record; from Mr. Erskine of Linlathan I have received the following: — Mr. Erskine recollects an old housekeeper at Airth who belonged to this class of character. A speech of this Mrs. Henderson was preserved in the family as having been made by her at the time of the execution of Louis XVI. in 1793. She was noticing the violent emotions exhibited by Mr. Bruce of Kinnaird, the Abyssinian traveller, at the sad event which had just taken place, and added, in the following quaint and caustic terms, "There's Kinnaird greeting as if there were nae a saunt on earth but himsell and the king o' France." How utterly unlike anything that would be said on such an occasion by an English person in the same position in life!

The other anecdote (which has just been sent by a kind correspondent from Aberdeenshire) is necessarily omitted in its proper place amongst the *Bethe-*

rall stories. But I am unwilling to lose it. It seems to me to possess more than the ordinary amount of those racy qualities which so often distinguished the older class of Scottish parish functionaries. The story is recorded as having been told by the late Rev. Alexander Allardice, minister of Forgue in Aberdeenshire, who possessed an unusual vein of dry caustic humour, and who told stories of that description in a most relishable way.

A neighbouring minister was to assist Mr. Allardice, and arrived at the manse on Saturday, where he was to sleep, and take the duty on Sunday following. He was a conceited youth — a frothy declamatory preacher — and, as a stranger, anxious to make a great sensation in the county. After dinner, he strolled out into the churchyard, and encountered John the beddal and parish oracle engaged in digging a grave — and much of a humourist in his way — moreover, a formidable critic of the theological soundness of the neighbouring ministers. Our young divine having been very recently *placed*, supposed himself to be personally unknown to the Forgue functionary. Accordingly he began to pump beddal John as to the opinion held of the brethren around who had assisted at Forgue. To query after query John gave out his unvarying oracular response, "Na, sir, we dinna like him; he's nae soun'" — and "we dinna like him eather; *he's* nae soun'," clinching every decision with the "yerk" of a spadeful of earth on the grave's brink. At last the reverend

pumper having exhausted the circle of his brethren of the Presbytery, and secretly gratified, no doubt, with this summary and unqualified testimony against them, anxious to hear what was thought in the country side about himself, where he rather flattered himself he was creating a sensation, and trusting to his incognito (though John was perfectly aware who his colloquist was), ventured to ask, "Well, now, the parish of —— has got a famous preacher, the Rev. Mr. —— what do you think of *him?* is *he* 'soun'"? "'Od, sir," replied John, with a sly twinkle, and resting for a moment on his spade, "I hinna heard him mysel'; but folk that hae, say *he's* A' *soun'*." John recommenced digging with redoubled diligence, and exit the reverend querist, feeling, we may fancy, rather small.

If my anecdotes should occasionally excite amusement or even laughter, there is no harm done; but let it be remembered this is not the *object*. The object, as I say, is to show what the past referred to really was. In short, whatever tends to illustrate changes — to mark times that are gone — I have not hesitated to use.

We have now, therefore, to deal with common events and with changes which, though in themselves often deep and important, yet appear to the observer to affect only what is external; and as we must have some classification or arrangement of the subjects on which these changes are to be marked, I would propose to record some Reminiscences on the following subjects: —

I. On religious feelings and religious observances.
II. On old Scottish conviviality.
III. On the old Scottish domestic servant.
IV. On humour proceeding from Scottish language, including Scottish proverbs.
V. On Scottish stories of wit and humour.

CHAPTER I.

On Religious Feelings and Religious Observances.

ON this subject we would speak with deference. We have no intention of entering, in this volume, upon those great questions which are connected with recent church movements amongst us, or with national peculiarities of faith and discipline. It is impossible, however, to overlook entirely the fact of a gradual relaxation having gone on for some years, of the sterner features of the Calvinistic school of theology, — at any rate, of keeping its theoretic peculiarities more in the background. What we have to notice, in these pages are changes in the feelings with regard to religion and religious observances, which have appeared upon the exterior of society — the changes which belong to outward habits rather than to internal feelings. Of such changes many have taken place within my own experience. Scotland has ever borne the character of a moral and religious coun-

try ; and the mass of the people are a more church-going race than the masses of English population. I am not at all prepared to say that in the middle and lower ranks of life, our countrymen have undergone much change in regard to religious observances. But there can be no question that amongst the upper classes there are manifestations connected with religion now, which some years ago were not thought of. The attendance of men on public worship is of itself an example of the change we speak of. I am afraid that when Walter Scott described Monkbarns as being with difficulty "hounded out" to hear the sermons of good Mr. Blattergowl, he wrote from a knowledge of the habits of church-going then generally prevalent amongst Scottish lairds. The late Bishop Sandford told me that when he first came to Edinburgh — I suppose fifty years ago — few gentlemen attended church — very few indeed were seen at the communion — so much so that it was a matter of conversation when a male communicant, not an aged man, was observed at the table for the first time. Sydney Smith, when preaching in Edinburgh some forty years ago, seeing how almost exclusively congregations were made up of ladies, took for his text the verse from the Psalms, "Oh that men would therefore praise the Lord;" and with that touch of the facetious which marked everything he did, laid the emphasis on the word "men." Looking round the congregation and saying, "Oh that *men* would therefore praise the Lord," implying that

he used the word, not to describe the human species generally, but the male individuals as distinguished from the female portion. In regard to attendance by young men, both at church and communion, a marked change has taken place in my own experience. In fact, there is an attention excited towards church subjects, which, thirty years ago, would have been hardly credited. Nor is it only in connection with churches and church services that these changes have been brought forth, but an interest has been raised on the subject from Bible societies, missionary associations at home and abroad, schools and reformatory institutions, most of which, as regard active operation, have grown up during fifty years.

Nor should I omit to mention, what I trust may be considered as a change belonging to religious feeling, viz., that conversation is now conducted without that accompaniment of absurd and unmeaning oaths which was really once considered an essential embellishment of polite discourse. I distinctly recollect an elderly gentleman, when describing the opinion of a refined and polished female upon a particular point, putting into her mouth an unmistakeable round oath as the natural language in which people's sentiments and opinions would be ordinarily conveyed. This is a change wrought in men's feelings, which all must hail with great pleasure. Putting out of sight for a moment the sin of such a practice, and the bad influence it must have had upon all

emotions of reverence for the name and attributes of the Divine Being, and the natural effect of profane swearing, "to harden a' within," we might marvel at the utter folly and incongruity of making the practice an expression of anger, of surprise, or of using oaths as mere expletives in common discourse. A quaint anecdote, descriptive of such senseless ebullition, I have from a friend who mentioned the names of parties concerned: — A late Duke of Athole had invited a well-known character, a writer of Perth, to come up and meet him at Dunkeld for the transaction of some business. The Duke mentioned the day and hour when he should receive the man of law, who accordingly came punctually at the appointed time and place. But the Duke had forgotten the appointment, and gone to the hill, from which he could not return for some hours. A highlander present described the Perth writer's indignation, and his mode of shewing it, by a most elaborate course of swearing. "But whom did he swear at?" was the inquiry made of the narrator, who replied, "Ou, he didna sweer at ony thing parteecular, but juist stude in ta middle of ta road and swoor at lairge." I have from a friend also an anecdote which shews how entirely at one period the practice of swearing had become familiar even to female ears when mixed up with the intercourse of social life. A sister had been speaking of her brother as much addicted to this habit — "Our John sweers awfu', and we try to correct him; but," she added in a

candid and apologetic tone, "nae doubt it *is* a great set aff to conversation."

This is the place to notice changes which have taken place in regard to the questions of taste in the building and embellishing Scottish places of worship generally. Some years back there was a great jealousy of ornament in connection with churches and church services, and, in fact, all such embellishments were considered as marks of a departure from the simplicity of old Scottish worship,—they were distinctive of Episcopacy as opposed to the severer modes of Presbyterianism. The late Sir William Forbes used to give an account of a conversation, indicative of this feeling, which he had overheard between an Edinburgh inhabitant and his friend from the country. They were passing St. John's, which had just been finished, and the countryman asked, "Whatna kirk was that!" "Oh," said the townsman, "that is an English chapel," meaning Episcopalian. "Ay," said his friend, "there'll be walth o' images there." But, if unable to sympathize with architectural church ornament and embellishment, how much less could they sympathize with the performance of divine service, which included such musical accompaniments as intoning, chanting, and anthems? On the first introduction of Tractarianism into Scotland, the full choir service had been established in an Episcopal church, where a noble family had adopted those views, and carried them out regardless of expense. The lady who had been

instrumental in getting up these musical services was very anxious that a favourite female servant of the family — a Presbyterian of the old school — should have an opportunity of hearing them; accordingly, she very kindly took her down to church in the carriage, and on returning asked her what she thought of the music, etc., "Ou, it's varra bonny, varra bonny; but oh, my lady, it's an awfu' way of spending the Sabbath." The good woman could only look upon the whole thing as a musical performance. The organ was a great mark of distinction between Episcopalian and Presbyterian places of worship. I have heard of an old lady describing an Episcopalian clergyman, without any idea of disrespect, in these terms: — "Oh, he is a whistle-kirk minister." Of late years, however, a spirit of greater tolerance of such things has been growing up amongst us, — a greater tolerance, I suspect, even of organs and liturgies. In fact, we may say a new era has begun in Scotland as to church architecture and church ornaments. The use of stained glass, and the restoration of ancient edifices, indicate a revolution of feeling regarding this question. Beautiful and expensive churches are rising everywhere, and belonging to all denominations. It is not long since the building or repairing a new church, or the repairing and adapting an old church, implied in Scotland simply a production of the greatest possible degree of ugliness and bad taste at the least possible expense, and certainly never included any notion of ornament

in the details. Now, large sums are expended on places of worship without reference to creed. First-rate architects are employed. Fine Gothic structures are produced. The rebuilding of the Greyfriars' Church, the restoration of South Leith Church and of Glasgow Cathedral, the very bold experiment of adopting a style little known amongst us, the pure Lombard, in a church for Dr. W. L. Alexander, on George IV. Bridge, Edinburgh; the really splendid Free Church now erecting in Albany Street, with a Gothic mansion attached, and many similar cases, mark the spirit of the times regarding the application of what is beautiful in art to the service of religion. One might hope that changes such as these in the feelings, tastes, and associations, would have a beneficial effect in bringing the worshippers themselves into a more genial spirit of forbearance with each other. A friend of mine used to tell a story of an honest builder's views of church differences, which was very amusing, and quaintly professional. An English gentleman, who had arrived in a Scottish country town, was walking about to examine the various objects which presented themselves, and observed two rather handsome places of worship in course of erection nearly opposite to each other. He addressed a person, who happened to be the contractor for the chapels, and asked, "What was the difference between these two places of worship which were springing up so close to each other?" — meaning, of course, the

difference of the theological tenets of the two congregations. The contractor, who thought only of architectural differences, innocently replied, "There may be a difference of sax feet in length, but there's no aboon a few inches in the breadth." Would that all our religious differences could be brought within so narrow a compass!

It might be a curious question to consider how far motives founded on mere taste or sentiment may have operated in creating an interest towards religion, and in making it a more prominent and popular question than it was in the early portion of the present century. There are in this country two causes which have combined in producing these effects: — 1st. The great disruption which took place in the Church of Scotland no doubt called forth an attention to the subject which stirred up the public, and made religion at any rate a topic of deep interest for discussion and for partizanship. Men's minds were not *allowed* to remain in the torpid condition of a past generation. 2d. The æsthetic movement in religion, which some years since was made in England, has, of course, had its influence in Scotland, and many who shewed little concern about religion, whilst it was merely a question of doctrines, of precepts, and of worship, threw themselves keenly into the question when it became associated with ceremonial, and music, and high art. New ecclesiastical associations have been presented to Scottish tastes and feelings. With some minds, attachment

to the church is attachment to her Gregorian tones, jewelled chalices, lighted candles, embroidered altar-cloths, silver crosses, processions, copes, albs, and chasubles. But from whatever cause it proceeds, a great change has taken place in the general interest excited towards ecclesiastical questions. Religion now has numerous associations with the ordinary current of human life. In times past it was kept more as a thing apart. There was a false delicacy which made people shrink from encountering appellations that were usually bestowed upon those who made a more prominent appearance than the world at large, in regard to a religious profession.

A great change has taken place in this respect with persons of *all* shades of religious opinions. With an increased attention to the *externals* of religion, we believe that in many points the heart is more exercised also. Take, as an example, the practice of family prayer. Many excellent and pious households of the former generation would not venture upon the observance, I am afraid, because they were in dread of the sneer. There was a foolish application of the terms "Methodist," "saints," "over-righteous," where the practice was observed. It was to take up a rather decided position in the neighbourhood, and I can testify, that less than fifty years ago, a family would have been marked and talked of for a usage of which now throughout the country the *exception* is rather the unusual circumstance. A little anecdote from recollections in my

own family will furnish a good illustration of a state of feeling on this point now happily unknown. In a northern town of the east coast, where the earliest recollections of my life go back, there was usually a detachment of a regiment, who were kindly received and welcomed to the society, which in the winter months was very full and very gay. There was the usual measure of dining, dancing, supping, card-playing, and gossiping, which prevailed in country towns at the time. The officers were of course an object of much interest to the natives, and their habits were much discussed. A friend was staying in the family who partook a good deal of the Athenian temperament, viz., a delight in hearing and telling some new thing. On one occasion she burst forth in great excitement with the intelligence that "Sir Nathaniel Duckinfield, the officer in command of the detachment, had family prayers *every* morning!" A very near and dear relative of mine, knowing the tendency of the lady to gossip, pulled her up with the exclamation: "How can you repeat such things, Miss Ogilvy; nothing in the world but the ill-natured stories of Montrose!!" The remark was made quite innocently and unconsciously of the bitter satire it conveyed upon the feeling of the place. The "ill-nature" of these stories was true enough, because ill-nature was the motive of those who raised them; not because it is an ill-natured thing of itself to say of a family that they have household worship, but the ill-nature con-

sisted in their intending to throw out a sneer and a sarcasm upon a subject where all such reflections are unbecoming and indecorous. It is one of the best proofs of change of habits and associations on this matter, that the anecdote, exquisite as it is for our purpose, will hardly be understood by many of our young friends, or, at least, happily has lost much of its force and pungency.

These remarks apply to the state of religious feeling amongst the upper classes of society. I am not aware of much change in the religious habits of the Scottish peasantry — perhaps the elders have yielded something from the sternness of David Deans. But, as compared with the corresponding class in England, there are many circumstances to distinguish the theological tenets and strict observance of religious ordinances of the Scottish from the usual feelings of the English peasant.

The kindly feelings and interest of the pastoral relation always formed a very pleasing intercourse between minister and people. I have received from an anonymous correspondent an anecdote illustrative of this happy connection, for which he vouches as authentic : —

John Brown, Burgher minister at Whitburn (son of the commentator, and father of the late Rev. Dr. John Brown of Edinburgh, and grandfather of the present accomplished M. D. of the same name, author of "Rab and his Friends," etc.), in the early part of the century was travelling on a small sheltie [1]

[1] A Shetland pony.

to attend the summer sacrament at Haddington. Between Musselburgh and Tranent he overtook one of his own people. "What are ye dain' here, Janet, and whaur ye gaun in this warm wather?" "Deed sir," quo' Janet, "I'm gaun to Haddington *for the occasion*,[1] an' expeck to hear ye preach this efternoon." "Very weel, Janet, but whaur ye gaun to sleep?" "I dinna ken, sir, but Providence is aye kind, an'll provide a bed." On Mr. Brown jogged, and after service in the afternoon, before pronouncing the blessing, he said from the pulpit, "Whaur's the auld wifie that followed me frae Whitburn?" "Here I'm sir," uttered a shrill voice from a back seat. "Aweel," said Mr. Brown, "I have fand ye a bed; ye're to sleep wi' Johnnie Fife's lass."

There was at all times amongst the older Scottish peasantry a bold assertion of their religious opinions, and strong expression of their feelings. The spirit of the Covenanters lingered amongst the aged people whom I remember, but which time has considerably softened down. We have some recent authentic instances of this readiness in Scotchmen to bear testimony to their principles —

A friend has informed me that the late Lord Rutherfurd often told with much interest of a rebuke which he received from a shepherd, near Bonally, amongst the Pentlands. He had entered into conversation with him, and was complaining

[1] The Lord's Supper

bitterly of the weather, which prevented him enjoying his visit to the country, and said hastily and unguardedly, "What a d——d mist!" and then expressed his wonder how or for what purpose there should have been such a thing created as east wind. The shepherd, a tall, grim figure, turned sharp round upon him. "What ails you at the mist, sir; it weets the sod, it slockens the yowes, and"—adding with much solemnity—"it's God's wull;" and turned away with lofty indignation. Lord Rutherfurd used to repeat this with much candour as a fine specimen of rebuke from a sincere and simple mind.

Something like this is reported of an eminent professor of geology, who, visiting in the Highlands, met an old man on the hills on Sunday morning. The professor, partly from the effect of habit, and not adverting to the very strict notions on Sabbath desecration entertained in Ross-shire, had his pocket hammer in hand, and was thoughtlessly breaking the specimens of minerals he picked up by the way. The old man for some time eyed the geologist, and going up to him, quietly said, "Sir, ye're breaking something there forbye the stanes!"

The same feeling under a more fastidious form was exhibited to a traveller by a Scottish peasant:—An English artist travelling professionally through Scotland had occasion to remain over Sunday in a small town in the north. To while away the time, he walked out a short way in the environs, where

the picturesque ruin of a castle met his eye. He asked a countryman who was passing to be so good as tell him the name of the castle. The reply was somewhat startling — "It's no the day to be speering sic things!"

A manifestation of even still greater strictness, on the subject of Sabbath desecration, I have received from a relative of the family in which it occurred. About fifty years ago the Hon. Mrs. Stewart lived in Heriot Row, who had a cook, Jeannie by name, a paragon of excellence. One Sunday morning when her daughter (afterwards Lady Elton) went into the kitchen, she was surprised to find a new jack (recently ordered, and which was constructed on the principle of going constantly without winding up), wholly paralyzed and useless. Miss Stewart naturally inquired what accident had happened to the new jack, as it had stopped. The mystery was soon solved by Jeannie indignantly exclaiming that "she was nae gaeing to hae the fule thing clocking and rinning about in *her* kitchen a' the blessed Sabbath day."

There sometimes appears to have been in our countrymen an undue preponderance of zeal for Sabbath observance as compared with the importance attached to other commands, and especially as compared with the virtue of sobriety. The following dialogue between Mr. M—— of Glasgow, the celebrated artist, and an old highland acquaintance whom he had met with unexpectedly, will illustrate

the contrast between the severity of judgment passed upon treating the Sabbath with levity and the lighter censure attached to indulgence in whisky. Mr. M—— begins:—"Donald, what brought you here?" "Ou, weel, sir, it was a baad place yon; they were baad folk — but they're a God-fearin' set o' folk here!" "Well, Donald," said Mr. M., "I'm glad to hear it." "Ou ay, sir, 'deed are they; an' I'll gie ye an instance o't. Last Sabbath, just as the kirk was skailin', there was a drover chield frae Dumfries comin' along the road whustlin', an' lookin' *as happy* as if it was ta muddle o' the week; weel, sir, oor laads is a God-fearin' set o' laads, an' they were just comin' oot o' the kirk — od they yokit upon him, an' a'most killed him!" Mr. M., to whom their zeal seemed scarcely sufficiently well directed to merit his approbation, then asked Donald whether it had been drunkenness that induced the depravity of his former neighbours? "Weel, weel, sir," said Donald, with some hesitation, "*may*-bee; I'll no say but it micht." "Depend upon it," said Mr. M., "it's a bad thing, whisky." "Weel, weel, sir, replied Donald, "I'll no say but it *may*;" adding in a very decided tone — "speeciallie *baad* whusky!"

The Scottish peasantry of the older school delighted in expositions of *doctrinal* subjects, and in fact were extremely jealous of any minister who departed from their high standard of orthodox divinity, by selecting subjects which involved discussions

of strictly moral or *practical* questions. A worthy old clergyman having, upon the occasion of a communion Monday, taken a text of such a character, was thus commented on by an ancient dame of the congregation, who was previously acquainted with his style of discourse; — "if there's an ill text in a' the Bible, that creetur's aye sure to tak it."

It may be well supposed that a peasantry with such religious opinions would be much shocked at any persons whose principles were known to be of an *infidel* character. There is a story traditionary in Edinburgh regarding David Hume, which illustrates this feeling in a very amusing manner, and which I have heard it said, Hume himself often narrated. The philosopher had fallen from the path into the swamp at the back of the Castle, the existence of which I recollect hearing of from old persons forty years ago. He fairly stuck fast, and called to a woman who was passing, and begged her assistance. She passed on apparently without attending to the request; at his earnest entreaty, however, she came where he was, and asked him, "Are na ye Hume the Atheist?" "Well, well, no matter," said Hume; "Christian charity commands you to do good to every one." "Christian charity here, or Christian there," replied the woman, "I'll do naething for you till ye turn a Christian yersell — ye maun repeat the Lord's Prayer and the Creed, or faith I'll let ye grafel[1] there as I fand ye." The sceptic,

[1] Lie in a grovelling attitude. See Jamieson.

really afraid for his life, rehearsed the required formulas.

The feelings on such subjects entertained by the inhabitants of our crowded cities, wynds, and closes, are no criterion of the national religious character. It is a great difficulty to get them to attend Divine worship at all, as many circumstances combine to break off all associations with public services.

A lady, who is most active in visiting the houses of these outcasts from the means of grace, gives me an amusing instance of self-complacency arising from such attendance. She was visiting in the West Port, not far from the church established by my illustrious friend the late Dr. Chalmers. Having asked a poor woman if she ever attended it for Divine service — "Ou ay," she replied; "there's a man ca'd Chalmers preaches there, and I whiles gang in and hear him, just to encourage him, puir body!"

From the religious opinions of a people, the transition is natural to their political partialities. One great political change has passed over Scotland, which none now living can hardly be said to have actually *witnessed;* but they remember those who were contemporaries of the anxious scenes of '45, and many of us have known determined and thorough Jacobites. The poetry of that political period still remains, and we hear but as pleasant songs, those words and melodies which stirred the hearts and excited the deep enthusiasm of a past genera-

tion. But Jacobite anecdotes are fading from our knowledge. To many young persons they are unknown. Of these stories illustrative of Jacobite feelings and enthusiasm, many are of a character not fit for me to record. The good old ladies who were violent partisans of the Stuarts had little hesitation in referring without reserve to the future and eternal destiny of William of Orange. One anecdote which I had from a near relative of the family may be adduced in illustration of the powerful hold which the cause had upon the views and consciences of Jacobites.

A former Mr. Stirling of Keir had favoured the Stuart cause, and had in fact attended a muster of forces at the Brig of Turk in the year 1708. This symptom of a rising against the Government occasioned some uneasiness, and the authorities were very active in their endeavours to discover who were the leaders of the movement. Keir was suspected. The miller of Keir was brought forward as a witness, and swore positively that the Laird was *not* present. Now, as it was well known that he was there, and that the miller knew it, a neighbour asked him privately when he came out of the witness-box, how he could on oath assert such a falsehood. The miller replied, quite undaunted, and with a feeling of confidence in the righteousness of his cause approaching the sublime — "I would rather trust my soul to God's mercy than trust Keir's head into their hands."

CHAPTER II.

On Old Scottish Conviviality.

THE next change in manners which has been effected in the memory of many now living, regards the habits of conviviality, or, to speak more plainly, regards the banishment of *drunkenness* from polite society. It is indeed a most important and a blessed change. But it is a change the full extent of which many persons now alive have little conception of. It is hardly possible to realize the scenes which took place in society fifty years back, or even less. In many houses, when a party dined, the ladies going away was the signal for the commencement of a system of compulsory conviviality. No one was allowed to shirk — no daylight — no heeltaps — was the wretched jargon in which were expressed the propriety and the duty of seeing that the glass, when filled, must be emptied and drained. We have heard of glasses having the bottoms knocked off, so that no shuffling

tricks might be played with them, and that they could only be put down — empty.

Some relatives of mine travelling in the Highlands were amused by observing in a small road-side public-house the use of such an implement of conviviality, which called forth that quaint, humorous manner which is so thoroughly Scottish. Three drovers had met together and were celebrating their meeting by a liberal consumption of whisky; they filled their one glass without bottom and passed it on from one to another; one queer-looking pawky chield, whenever the glass came to his turn, remarked most gravely, "I think we wadna be the waur of some water," taking care, however, never to add any of the simple element, but quietly drank off his glass.

The scenes of excess which occurred in the houses where deep drinking was practised must have been most revolting to sober persons who were unaccustomed to such conviviality; as in the case of a drinking Angus laird, entertaining as his guest a London merchant of formal manners and temperate habits. The poor man was driven from the table when the drinking set in hard, and stole away to take refuge in his bed-room. The company, however, were determined not to let the worthy citizen off so easily, but proceeded in a body, with the laird at their head, and invaded his privacy by exhibiting bottles and glasses at his bed-side. Losing all patience, the wretched victim gasped out his indignation, — "Sir, your hospitality borders upon bru-

tality." It must have had a fatal influence also on many persons to whom drinking was most injurious, and who were yet not strong-minded enough to resist the temptations to excess. Poor James Boswell, who certainly required no *extraordinary* urging to take a glass too much, is found, in his letters which have recently come to light, laying the blame of his excesses to "falling into a habit which still prevails in Scotland;" and then he remarks, with censorious emphasis, on the "drunken manners of his countrymen." This was about 1770.

In my part of the country the traditionary stories of drinking prowess are quite marvellous. On Deeside there flourished a certain Saunders Paul (whom I remember an old man), an innkeeper at Banchory. He was said to have drank whisky, glass for glass, to the claret of Mr. Maule and the Laird of Skene for a whole evening; and in those days there was a traditional story of his despatching, at one sitting, in company with a character celebrated for conviviality — one of the men employed to float rafts of timber down the Dee — three dozen of porter. Of this Mr. Paul it was recorded, that on being asked if he considered porter as a wholesome beverage, he replied, "Oh yes, if you don't take above a dozen." Saunders Paul was, as I have said, the innkeeper at Banchory; his friend and *porter* companion was drowned in the Dee, and when told that the body had been found down the stream below Crathes, he coolly remarked, "I am surprised at

that, for I never kenn'd him pass the inn before without comin' in for a glass."

There was a sort of infatuation in the supposed dignity and manliness attached to powers of deep potation, and the fatal effects of drinking were spoken of in a manner both reckless and unfeeling. Thus, I have been assured that a well-known old laird of the old school expressed himself with great indignation at the charge brought against hard drinking that it had actually *killed* people. "Na, na, I never knew onybody killed wi' drinking, but I hae kend some that deed in the training." A positive *eclat* was attached to the accomplished and well-trained consumer of claret or of whisky toddy, which gave an importance and even merit to the practice of drinking, and which had a most injurious effect. I am afraid some of the Pleydels of the old school would have looked with the most ineffable contempt on the degeneracy of the present generation in this respect, and that the temperance movement would be little short of insanity in their eyes; and this leads me to a remark. In considering this portion of our subject, we should bear in mind a distinction. The change we now speak of involves more than a mere change of a custom or practice in social life. It is a change in men's sentiments and feelings on a certain great question of morals. Except we enter into this distinction we cannot appreciate the extent of the change which has really taken place in regard to intemperate habits.

I have an anecdote from a descendant of Principal Robertson, of an address made to him, which shewed the real importance attached to all that concerned the system of drinking in his time. The Principal had been invited to spend some days in a country house, and the minister of the parish (a jovial character) had been asked to meet him. Before dinner he went up to Dr. Robertson and addressed him confidentially, "Doctor, I understand ye are a brother of my gude freend Peter Robertson of Edinburgh, therefore I'll gie ye a piece of advice, — Bend [1] weel to the Madeira at dinner, for here ye'll get little o't after." I have known persons who held that a man who could not drink must have a degree of feebleness and imbecility of character. But as this is an important point, I will adduce the higher authority of Lord Cockburn, and quote from him two examples, very different certainly in their nature, but both bearing upon the question. I refer to what he says of Lord Hermand — "With Hermand drinking was a virtue; he had a sincere respect for drinking, indeed a high moral approbation, and a serious compassion for the poor wretches who *could* not indulge in it, and with due contempt of those who could but did not;" and, secondly, I refer to Lord Cockburn's pages for an anecdote which illustrates the perverted feeling I refer to, now happily no longer existing. It relates the opinion expressed by an old drunken writer of

[1] Old Scotch for drink hard.

Selkirk (whose name is not mentioned) regarding his anticipation of professional success for Mr. Cranstoun, afterwards Lord Corehouse. Sir Walter Scott, William Erskine, and Cranstoun had dined with this Selkirk writer, and Scott, of hardy, strong, and healthy frame, had matched the writer himself in the matter of whisky punch. Poor Cranstoun, of refined and delicate mental and bodily temperament, was a bad hand at such work, and was soon off the field. On the party breaking up, the Selkirk writer expressed his admiration of Scott, assuring him that *he* would rise high in the profession, and adding: "I'll tell ye what, Maister Walter, that lad Cranstoun may get to the tap o' the bar, if he can; but tak my word for't, it's no be by drinking."

A legal friend has told me of a celebrated circuit where Lord Hermand was judge, and Clephane depute-advocate. The party got drunk at Ayr, and so continued (although quite able for their work) till the business was concluded at Jedburgh. Some years after, my informant heard that this circuit had, at Jedburgh, acquired the permanent name of the "*daft* circuit."

Lord Cockburn was fond of describing a circuit scene at Stirling, in his early days at the bar, under the presidency of his friend and connection Lord Hermand. After the circuit dinner, and when drinking had gone on for some time, young Cockburn observed places becoming vacant in the social

circle, but no one going out at the door. He found that the individuals had dropt down under the table. He took the hint, and by this ruse retired from the scene. He lay quiet till the beams of the morning sun penetrated the apartment. The judge and some of his stanch friends coolly walked up-stairs, washed their hands and faces, came down to breakfast, and went into court quite fresh and fit for work.

The feeling of importance frequently attached to powers of drinking, was formally attested by a well-known western baronet of convivial habits and convivial memory. He was desirous of bearing testimony to the probity, honour, and other high moral qualities of a friend whom he wished to commend. Having fully stated these claims to consideration and respect, he deemed it proper to notice also his *convivial* attainments; he added accordingly, with cautious approval on so important a point, — "and he is a fair drinker." [1]

The following anecdote is an amusing sample of Scottish servant humour and acuteness in measuring the extent of consumption by a convivial party in Forfarshire. The party had met at a farmer's house not far from Arbroath to celebrate the recon-

[1] A friend learned in Scottish history suggests an ingenious remark, that this might mean more than a mere *full drinker*. To drink "fair," used to imply that the person drank in the same proportion as the company; to drink more would be unmannerly; to drink less might imply some unfair motive. Either interpretation shews the importance attached to drinking and all that concerned it.

ciliation of two neighbouring farmers who had long been at enmity. The host was pressing and hospitable; the party sat late, and consumed a glorious quantity of whisky toddy. The wife was penurious; and grudged the outlay. When at last, at a morning hour, the party dispersed, the lady, who had not slept in her anxiety, looked over the stairs and eagerly asked the servant girl, "How many bottles of whisky have they used, Betty." The lass, who had not to pay for the whisky, but had been obliged to go to the well to fetch the water for the toddy, coolly answered, "I dinna ken, mem, but they've drunken sax gang o' watter."

We cannot imagine a better illustration of the general habits that prevailed in Scottish society in regard to drinking about the time we speak of than one which occurs in the recently published "Memoirs of a Banking House," that of the late Sir William Forbes, Bart., of Pitsligo. The book comprises much that is interesting to the family, and to Scotchmen. It contains a pregnant hint as to the manners of polite society and business habits in those days. Of John Coutts, one of four brothers connected with the house, Sir William records how he was "more correct in his conduct than the others; so much so, that Sir William *never but once* saw him in the counting house disguised with liquor, and incapable of transacting business."

I am indebted to the kindness of Mr. W. Chambers for the following graphic illustration of the

scenes which the drunken habits of the time must often have exhibited in social life: — In these bygone days, Peeblesshire had its due proportion of "drunken lairds," who, besides over-indulging in their own and their neighbours' houses, very frequently spent a night weekly in the chief inn in the county town on the occasion of attending market. Their return home on horseback, in the dull gray mornings after these coarse convivialities in Peebles, required considerable tact, as the roads were far from being good, and, in some places, went along unguarded precipitous banks overhanging the Tweed. There was a particularly bad bit of road between Peebles and Innerleithen. Here the river makes a sudden turn at the foot of a steep bank, and forms a deep, dark pool called "the dirt-pot." Now, it happened that a certain old laird had to pass this trying spot on his way home when more than half tipsy; and it seems that, on one occasion, he had been mortally affronted by some one alleging, by way of joke, "that he was afraid to pass the dirt-pot." This affront stuck to the laird. While sober the recollection of it appeared to be in abeyance, but it always came back with full force when he reached a point of inebriety, and that was every night. Reaching this unhappy crisis, he broke out in an intolerably quarrelsome humour, muttering invectives on the subject which oppressed his mind — "Who says I am afraid to pass the dirt-pot? I say, shew me the man that tells me I am afraid to pass the dirt-pot;" — and so on he would have gone till he

became perfectly outrageous. But there was an understanding in the house about what was to be done on these occasions. No sooner had the ominous words "dirt-pot" escaped the laird's lips, than the lady, his wife, quietly touched the bell. A servant entered the room, and, slipping behind the laird, seized hold of him in her arms, and dragged him off to bed — the poor laird being heard all the way mumbling disjointed imprecations against all who dared to say he was afraid to pass the dirt-pot.

Strangely enough — indeed, most strange of all — the lady who had this unpleasant duty to perform, actually took pains to cultivate habits of drinking in her sons. An accomplished and worthy gentlewoman, she had, nevertheless, the common notion that drinking was part of the necessary business of life, and that all young men should be accustomed to carry liquor discreetly. Accordingly, she daily put before the young laird a certain quantity of wine which he was obliged to drink, whether he liked it or not. This reminds us of similar practices half a century ago in Ireland, when fathers used to tell their sons "to make their head while they were young!"

In the Highlands this sort of feeling extended to an almost incredible extent, even so much as to obscure the moral and religious sentiments. Of this a striking proof was afforded in a circumstance which took place in my own church soon after I came into it. One of our Gaelic clergy had so far forgotten

himself as to appear in the church somewhat the worse of liquor. This having happened so often as to come to the ears of the Bishop, he suspended him from the performance of divine service. Against this decision the people were a little disposed to rebel, because, according to their Highland notions, "a gentleman was no the waur for being able to tak a gude glass o' whisky." These were the notions of a people in whose eyes the power of swallowing whisky conferred distinction, and with whom inability to take the fitting quantity was a mark of a mean and futile character. Sad to tell, the funeral rites of Highland chieftains were not supposed to have been duly celebrated except there was an immoderate and often fatal consumption of whisky. It has been related that at the last funeral in the Highlands, conducted according to the traditions of the olden times, several of the guests fell victims to the usage, and actually died of the excesses.

Scenes of a most incongruous and extraordinary nature are still traditionally connected with such occasions. Within the last thirty years, a laird of Dundonald, a small estate in Ross-shire, died at Inverness. There was open house, therefore, for a few days, and great eating and drinking. Here the corpse commenced its progress towards its appointed home on the coast, and people followed in multitudes to give it a partial convoy, all of whom had to be entertained. It took altogether a fortnight to bury

poor Dundonald, and the expense must have been heavy. This, however, is looked back to at Inverness as the last of the real grand old Highland funerals. Such notions of what is due to the memory of the departed have now become unusual if not obsolete. I myself witnessed the first great change in this matter. I officiated at the funeral of the late Duke of Sutherland. The procession was a mile long. Refreshments were provided for 7000 persons: beef, bread, and beer, but not one glass of whisky was allowed on the property that day! It may, perhaps, be said that the change we speak of is not peculiar to Scotland; that in England the same change has been apparent, and that drunkenness has passed away in the higher circles, as a matter of course, as refinement and taste made an advancement in society. This is true. But there were some features of the question which were peculiar to Scotland, and which at one time rendered it less probable that intemperance would give way in the north. It seemed in some quarters to have taken deeper root amongst us. The system of pressing, both in eating and drinking, seemed more inveterate. Nothing can more powerfully illustrate the deep-rooted character of intemperate habits in families than an anecdote which was related to me, as coming from the late Mr. Mackenzie, author of the "Man of Feeling." He had been involved in a regular drinking party. He was keeping as free from the usual excesses as he was able, and as he marked companions around him fall-

ing victims to the power of drink, he himself dropped off under the table among the slain, as a measure of precaution, and lying there, his attention was called to a small pair of hands working at his throat; on asking what it was, a voice replied, "Sir, I'm the lad that's to lowse the neckcloths." Here, then, was a family, where, on drinking occasions, it was the appointed duty of one of the household to attend, and, when the guests were becoming helpless, to untie their cravats in fear of apoplexy or suffocation. We ought certainly to be grateful for the change which has taken place from such a system; for this change has made a great revolution in Scottish social life. The charm and the romance long attached in the minds of some of our countrymen to the whole system and concerns of hard drinking was indeed most lamentable and absurd. At tavern suppers, where, nine times out of ten, it was the express *object* of those who went to get drunk, such stuff as "regal purple stream," "rosy wine," "quaffing the goblet," "bright sparkling nectar," "chasing the rosy hours," and so on, tended to keep up the delusion, and make it a monstrous fine thing for men to sit up drinking half the night, to have frightful headaches all next day, to make maudlin idiots of themselves as they went home, and to become brutes amongst their family when they got home. And here I may introduce the mention of a practice connected with the convivial habits of which we have been speaking; but which has for sometime passed away, at least from

private tables,—I mean the absurd system of calling for toasts and sentiments each time the glasses were filled. During dinner not a drop could be touched, except in conjunction with others, and with each drinking to the health of each. But toasts came *after* dinner. I can just remember the practice in partial operation, and my astonishment as a mere boy, when accidentally dining at table and hearing my mother called upon to "give the company a gentleman," is one of my very earliest reminiscences. Lord Cockburn must have remembered them well, and I will quote his most amusing account of the effects:—"After dinner, and before the ladies retired, there generally began what was called '*Rounds*' of toasts, when each gentleman named an absent lady, and each lady an absent gentleman, separately; or one person was required to give an absent lady, and another person was required to match a gentleman with that lady, and the persons named were toasted, generally, with allusions and jokes about the fitness of the union. And worst of all, there were 'Sentiments.' These were short epigrammatic sentences expressive of moral feelings and virtues, and were thought refined and elegant productions. A faint conception of their nauseousness may be formed from the following examples, every one of which I have heard given a thousand times, and which indeed I only recollect from their being favourites. The glasses being filled, a person was asked for his or for her sentiment, when this, or something simi-

lar, was committed, 'may the pleasures of the evening bear the reflections of the morning;' or, 'may the friends of our youth be the companions of our old age;' or, 'delicate pleasures to susceptible minds,' 'may the honest heart never feel distress;' 'may the hand of charity wipe the tear from the eye of sorrow.' The conceited, the ready, or the reckless, hackneyed in the art, had a knack of making new sentiments applicable to the passing incidents with great ease. But it was a dreadful oppression on the timid or the awkward. They used to shudder, ladies particularly; for nobody was spared when their turn in the *round* approached. Many a struggle and blush did it cost; but this seemed only to excite the tyranny of the masters of the craft; and compliance could never be avoided, except by more torture than yielding. . . . It is difficult for those who have been born under a more natural system to comprehend how a sensible man, a respectable matron, a worthy old maid, and especially a girl, could be expected to go into company easily, on such conditions."[1]

This accompaniment of domestic drinking, I mean accompanying each glass by a toast or sentiment — the practice of which is now confined to public entertainments — was then invariable in private parties, and was supposed to enliven and promote the good fellowship of the social circle. Thus

[1] Lord Cockburn's Memorials of his Time, p. 37, *et seq.*

Ferguson in one of his poems, in describing a dinner, says :—

> " The grace is said ; it's nae ower lang,
> The claret reams in bells.
> Quo' Deacon, ' Let the toast round gang ;
> Come, here's our noble sels
> Weel met the day.' "

There was a great variety of these toasts, some of them exclusively Scottish. A correspondent has favoured me with a few reminiscences of such incentives to inebriety.

The ordinary form of drinking a health was in the address, " Here's t' ee."

Then such as the following were named by successive members of the company at the call of the host :—

The land o' cakes (Scotland).
Mair freens and less need o' them.
Thumping luck and fat weans.
When we're gaun up the hill o' fortune may we ne'er meet a frien' comin doun.
May ne'er waur be amang us.
May the hinges o' friendship never rust, or the wings o' luve lose a feather.
Here's to them that lo'es us, or lends us a lift.
Here's health to the sick, stilts to the lame, claise to the back, and brose to the wame.
Here's health, wealth, wit, and meal.
The deil rock them in a creel that does na' wish us a' weel.
Horny hands and weather beaten haffets (cheeks).
The rending o' rocks and the pu'in doun o' auld houses.

The above two belong to the mason craft; the first implies a wish for plenty of work, and health to do it; the second, to erect new buildings and clear away old ones.

May the winds o' adversity ne'er blaw open our door.
May poortith ne'er throw us in the dirt, or gowd into the high saddle.[1]
May the mouse ne'er leave our meal pock wi' the tear in its ee.
Blythe may we a' be,
Ill may we never see.
Breeks and brochan (brose).
May we ne'er want a freend or a drappie to gie him.
Gude een to ye a', an' tak your nappy,
A willy-waught's a gude night cappy.[2]
May we a' be canty and cozy,
An' ilk hae a wife in his bozy.
A cozy but, and a canty ben,
To couthie[3] *women and trusty men.*
The ingle neuk wi' routh[4] *o' bannocks and bairns.*
Here's to him wha winna beguile ye.
Mair sense and mair siller,
Horn, corn, wool, an' yarn.[5]

The system of giving toasts was so regularly established, that collections of them were published to add brilliancy to the festive board. By the kindness of the librarian, I have seen a little volume which is in the Writers' Library of Edinburgh. It

[1] May we never be cast down by adversity, or unduly elevated by prosperity.

[2] A toast at parting or breaking up of the party.

[3] Loving. [4] Plenty. [5] Toasts for agricultural dinners.

is entitled "The Gentleman's New Bottle Com panion," Edinburgh, printed in the year MDCCLXXVII. It contains various toasts and sentiments which the writer considered to be suitable to such occasions. Of the taste and decency of the companies where some of them could be made use of, the less is said the better.

I have heard also of large traditionary collections of toasts and sentiments belonging to old clubs and societies extending back above a century, but I have not seen any of them, and I believe my readers will think they have had quite enough. A correspondent, however, to whom I applied respecting these minute books, sends me the following curious information :—

"I have had an opportunity of examining a series of Records of an Edinburgh Club, extending from the middle to the close of the last century, in which many social changes are exhibited year after year. Its rules were clearly laid down and rigorously enforced. Fines for non-attendance at the club meetings were in all cases rigidly exacted, and if any man left the supper-table before the 'serious drinking' began, he was fined instanter in four magnums of claret. When whisky or usquebaugh was first used as a social drink I have no means of knowing. I do not know that the earlier Scottish poets allude to it at all, and I think that Ferguson and Burns are the first to sing its praises. In these 'records' the first mention of 'a gile of whisko' at the club supper is in the year 1767, and toddy is not included in their bills of fare until a year later, and then only in small quantities (except, indeed, in one instance, when the club is charged for forty-two bottles of 'todie' at one sitting!) French wines are the favourite drinks.

"A Solan goose figures occasionally at their suppers, and is charged 10*s*. Some of the members prefer 'speldings' to anchovies, and there are very suggestive items in each bill for broken glasses and china, as well as for 'chairs and cadies' (sedans and their bearers), for the use of those members who found it inconvenient to walk home. One of these jovial club supper bills (sometimes they are of alarming magnitude), now lies before me, stained by the wine spilled by unsteady hands a century ago, and its margins scrawled over, with the somewhat eccentric calculations as to the liability of each member, by the chairman of the evening, who no doubt had presided with his usual distinguished ability, 'and kept the company long together in the most exalted degree of harmony and good humour,' as it is entered in the minutes of the evening. It may interest some readers to see a true copy of a last century tavern supper bill for a club of sixteen and a few guests. It is worth remarking that each pint stoup of claret contained as much as *two quart bottles!!*"

1783,		*To John Fortune.*		
June 4.	Supper, Jellies, and Sillubobs	£4	10	„
	25 Pints Claret, at 10*s*.	12	10	„
	4 Botls. Sherry, at 3*s*.	„	15	„
	7 Do. Port, at 2*s*. 6*d*.	„	17	6
	Port Negus	„	18	„
	Porter	„	5	6
	Punch and Todie	„	12	„
	Bread and beer	„	7	6
	Biscuits, &c.	„	4	6
	Prawns	„	4	„
	Orangers, reasons, and almons	„	14	„
	Chairs and Cadies	„	12	6
	Drink to the Officer and Cadies	„	7	6
	Breakages	„	4	6
	Wax Lights	1	2	„
		£24	4	6

The favourable reaction which has taken place in regard to the whole system of intemperance may very fairly, in the first place, be referred to an improved *moral* feeling. But other causes have also assisted; and it is curious to observe how the different changes in the modes of society bear upon one another. The alteration in the convivial habits which we are noticing in our own country may be partly due to alteration of hours. The old plan of early dining favoured a system of suppers, and after supper was a great time for convivial songs and sentiments. This of course induced drinking to a late hour. Most drinking songs imply the night as the season of conviviality — thus in a popular madrigal: —

> "By the gaily circling glass,
> We can tell how minutes pass,
> By the hollow cask we 're told,
> How the waning *night* grows old."

And Burns thus marks the time: —

> "It is the moon, I ken her horn,
> That 's blinkin' in the lift sae hie;
> She shines sae bright, to wyle us hame,
> But by my sooth she 'll wait a wee."

The young people of the present day have no idea of the state of matters in regard to the supper system when it was the normal condition of society. The late dining hours may make the social circle

more formal, but they have been far less favourable to drinking propensities. After such dinners as ours are now, suppers are clearly out of the question. One is astonished to look back and recal the scenes to which were attached associations of hilarity, conviviality, and enjoyment. Drinking parties were protracted beyond the whole Sunday, having begun by a dinner on Saturday; imbecility and prostrate helplessness were a common result of these bright and jovial scenes; and by what perversion of language, or by what obliquity of sentiment, the notions of pleasure could be attached to scenes of such excess — to the nausea, the disgust of sated appetite, and the racking headache — it is not easy to explain. There were men of heads so hard, and of stomachs so insensible, that, like my friend Saunders Paul, they could stand anything in the way of drink. But to men in general, and to the more delicate constitutions, such a life must have been a cause of great misery. To a certain extent, and up to a certain point, wine may be a refreshment and a wholesome stimulant; nay, it is a medicine, and a valuable one, and as such, comes recommended on fitting occasions by the physician. *Beyond* this point, as sanctioned and approved by nature, the use of wine is only degradation. Well did the sacred writer call wine, when thus taken in excess, "a mocker." It makes all men equal, because it makes them all idiotic. It allures them into a vicious indulgence, and then mocks their folly, by

depriving them of any sense they may ever have possessed.

It does not appear that at this time a similar excess in *eating* accompanied this prevalent tendency to excess in drinking. Scottish tables were at that period plain and abundant, but epicurism or gluttony do not seem to have been handmaids to drunkenness. A humorous anecdote, however, of a full-eating laird, may well accompany those which appertain to the drinking lairds. — A lady in the north having watched the proceedings of a guest, who ate long and largely, she ordered the servant to take away, as he had at last laid down his knife and fork. To her surprise, however, he resumed his work, and she apologised to him, saying, "I thought, Mr. ——, you had done." "Oh, so I had, mem; but I just fan' a doo in the *redd* o' my plate." He had discovered a pigeon lurking amongst the bones and refuse of his plate, and could not resist finishing it.

CHAPTER III.

On the Old Scottish Domestic Servant.

We come now to a subject on which a great change has taken place in this country during my own experience. I allude to the third division which we proposed of these desultory remarks, viz., those peculiarities of intercourse which some years back marked the connection between masters and servants. In many Scottish houses a great familiarity prevailed between members of the family and the domestics. For this many reasons might have been assigned. Indeed, when we consider the simple modes of life which discarded the ideas of ceremony or etiquette, the retired and uniform style of living which afforded few opportunities for break or change in the domestic arrangements, and when we add to these a free, unrestrained, unformal, and natural style of intercommunion, which seems rather a national characteristic, we need not be surprised to find in quiet Scottish families a sort of

intercourse with old domestics which can hardly be looked for now, when habits are changing so fast, and where much of the quiet eccentricity belonging to us as a national characteristic, is almost necessarily softened down or driven out. Many circumstances thus conspired to promote familiarity with old domestics which are now entirely changed. We take the case of a middle-aged servant, or a young servant passing year after year in a family. The servant grows up into old age and confirmed habits when the laird is becoming a man, a husband, father of a family. The domestic cannot forget the days when his master was a child, riding on his back, applying to him for help in difficulties about his fishing, his rabbits, his pony, his going to school. All the family know how attached he is; nobody likes to speak cross to him. He is a privileged man. The faithful old servant of thirty, forty, or fifty years, if with a tendency to be jealous, cross, and interfering, becomes a great nuisance. Still the relative position was the result of good feelings. If the familiarity sometimes became a nuisance, it was a wholesome nuisance, and relic of a simpler time gone by. But the case of the old servant, whether agreeable or troublesome, was often so fixed and established in the households of past days, that there was scarce a possibility of getting away from it. The well-known story of the answer of one of these domestic tyrants to the irritated master, who was making an effort to free himself from the thraldom, shews the idea en-

tertained by *one* of the parties, at least, of the permanency of the tenure. I am assured by a friend that the true edition of the story was this — An old Mr. Erskine of Dun had one of these old retainers, under whose language and unreasonable assumption he had long groaned. He had almost determined to bear it no longer, when, walking out with his man, on crossing a field, the master exclaimed, "There's a hare." Andrew looked at the place, and coolly replied, "What a big lee, it's a cauff." The master, quite angry now, plainly told the old domestic that they *must* part. But the tried servant of forty years, not dreaming of the possibility of *his* dismissal, innocently asked, "Ay, sir; whare ye gaun? I'm sure ye're aye best at hame;" supposing that, if there were to be any disruption, it must be the master who would change the place. An example of a similar fixedness of tenure in an old servant was afforded in an anecdote related of an old coachman long in the service of a noble lady, and who gave all the trouble and annoyance which he conceived were the privileges of his position in the family. At last the lady fairly gave him notice to quit, and told him he must go. The only satisfaction she got was the quiet answer, "Na, na, my lady; I druve ye to your marriage, and I shall stay to drive ye to your burial." It is but fair, however, to give an anecdote in which the master and the servant's position was *reversed*, in regard to the wish for change: — An old servant of a relative of my own, with an ungovernable temper,

became at last so weary of his master's irascibility, that he declared he must leave, and gave as his reason the fits of anger which came on and produced such great annoyance that he could not stand it any longer. His master, unwilling to lose him, tried to coax him by reminding him that the anger was soon off. "Ay," replied the other very shrewdly, "but it's nae suner aff than it's on again." I remember well an old servant of the old school, who had been fifty years domesticated in a family. Indeed I well remember the celebration of the half-century service completed. There were rich scenes with Sandy and his mistress. Let me recall you both to memory. Let me think of you, the kind, generous, warm-hearted mistress. A gentlewoman by descent and by feeling. A true friend, a sincere Christian; and let me think, too, of you, Sandy, an honest, faithful, and attached member of the family. For you were in that house rather as an humble friend than a servant. But out of this fifty years of attached service there sprung a sort of domestic relation and freedom of intercourse which would surprise people in these days. And yet Sandy knew his place. Like Corporal Trim, who, although so familiar and admitted to so much familiarity with my Uncle Toby, never failed in the respectful address — never forgot to say "your honour." At a dinner party Sandy was very active about changing his mistress's plate, and whipped it off when he saw that she had got a piece of rich pattee upon it. His mistress not liking such

rapid movements, and at the same time knowing that remonstrance was in vain, exclaimed, "Hout, Sandy, I'm no dune," and dabbed her fork into the pattee as it disappeared, to rescue a morsel. I remember her praise of English mutton was a great annoyance to the Scottish prejudices of Sandy. One day she was telling me of a triumph Sandy had upon that subject. The smell of the joint roasting had become very offensive through the house. The lady called out to Sandy to have the doors closed, and adding, "that must be some horrid Scotch mutton you have got." To Sandy's delight, this was a leg of English mutton his mistress had expressly chosen, and, as she significantly told me, "Sandy never let that down upon me."

On Deeside there existed, in my recollection, besides the Saunders Paul I have alluded to, a number of extraordinary acute and humorous Scottish characters amongst the lower classes. The native gentry enjoyed their humour, and hence arose a familiarity of intercourse which called forth many amusing scenes and quaint rejoinders. A celebrated character of this description bore the sobriquet of "Boaty." He had acted as Charon of the Dee at Banchory, and passed the boat over the river before there was a bridge. Boaty had many curious sayings recorded of him. When speaking of the gentry around, he characterized them according to their occupations and activity of habits — thus, "As to Mr. Russell of Blackha', he just works himsell like a

paid labourer; Mr. Duncan 's a' the day fish, fish, but Sir Robert 's a perfect gentleman; he does naething, naething." Boaty was a first-rate salmon-fisher himself, and was much sought after by amateurs who came to Banchory for the sake of the sport afforded by the beautiful Dee. He was, perhaps, a little spoiled, and presumed upon the indulgence and familiarity shewn to him in the way of his craft, — as, for example, he was in attendance with his boat on a sportsman who was both skilful and successful, for he caught salmon after salmon. Between each fish catching he solaced himself with a good pull from a flask, which he returned to his pocket, however, without offering to let Boaty have any participation in the refreshment. Boaty, partly a little professionally jealous, perhaps, at the success, and partly indignant at receiving less than his usual attention on such occasions, and seeing no prospect of amendment, deliberately pulled the boat to shore, shouldered the oars, rods, landing-nets, and all the fishing apparatus which he had provided, and set off homewards. His companion, far from considering his day's work to be over, and keen for more sport, was amazed, and peremptorily ordered him to come back. But all the answer made by the offended Boaty was, "Na, na; them 'at drink by themsells may just fish by themsells."

The charge these old domestics used to take of the interests of the family, and the cool way in which they took upon them to protect those interests, some-

times led to very provoking, and sometimes to very ludicrous exhibitions of importance. A friend told me of a dinner scene illustrative of this sort of interference which had happened at Airth in the last generation. Mrs. Murray of Abercairney had been amongst the guests, and at dinner one of the family noticed that she was looking for the proper spoon to help herself with salt. The old servant Thomas was appealed to, that the want might be supplied. He did not notice the appeal. It was repeated in a more peremptory manner, "Thomas, Mrs. Murray has not a salt spoon," to which he replied most emphatically, "Last time Mrs. Murray dined here, we lost a salt spoon." An old servant who took a similar charge of everything that went on in the family, having observed that his master thought he had drunk wine with every lady at table, but had overlooked one, jogged his memory with the question, "What ails ye at her wi' the green gown?"

In my own family I know a case of a very long service, and where, no doubt, there was much interest and attachment, but it was a case where the temper had not softened under the influence of years, but had rather assumed that form of disposition which we denominate *crusty*. My grand-uncle, Sir A. Ramsay, died in 1806, and left a domestic who had been in his service since he was ten years of age; and being at the time of his master's death past fifty or well on to sixty, he must have been more than forty years a servant in the family. From the retired life

my grand-uncle had been leading, Jamie Layal had much of his own way, and, like many a domestic so situated, he did not like to be contradicted, and, in fact, could not bear to be found fault with. My uncle, who had succeeded to a part of my grand-uncle's property, succeeded also to Jamie Layal, and from respect to his late master's memory and Jamie's own services, he took him into his house, intending him to act as house servant. However, this did not answer, and he was soon kept on, more with the form than the reality of any active duty, and took any light work that was going on about the house. In this capacity it was his daily task to feed a flock of turkeys who were growing up to maturity. On one occasion, my aunt having followed him in his work, and having observed an enormous waste of food, and that the ground was actually covered with grain which they could not eat, and which would soon be destroyed and lost, naturally remonstrated, and suggested a more reasonable and provident supply. But all the answer she got from the offended Jamie was a bitter rejoinder, "Weel, then, neist time they shall get nane ava!" On another occasion a family from a distance had called whilst my uncle and aunt were out of the house. Jamie came into the parlour to deliver the cards, or to announce that they had called. My aunt, somewhat vexed at not having been in the way, inquired what message Mr. and Mrs. Innes had left, as she had expected one. "No! no message." She returned to the

charge, and asked again if they had not told him *anything* he was to repeat. Still, "No! no message." "But did they say nothing? Are you sure they said nothing?" Jamie, sadly put out and offended at being thus interrogated, at last burst forth, "They neither said ba nor bum," and indignantly left the room, banging the door after him. A characteristic anecdote of one of these old domestics I have from a friend who was acquainted with the parties concerned. The old man was standing at the sideboard and attending to the demands of a pretty large dinner party; the calls made for various wants from the company became so numerous and frequent that the attendant got quite bewildered, and lost his patience and temper; at length he gave vent to his indignation in a remonstrance addressed to the whole company, "Cry a' thegither, that's the way to be served."

I have two characteristic and dry Scottish answers, traditional in the Lothian family, supplied to me by the present excellent and highly gifted young Marquis. A Marquis of Lothian of a former generation, observed in his walk two workmen very busy with a ladder to reach a bell, on which they next kept up a furious ringing. He asked what was the object of making such a din; to which the answer was, "Oh, juist, my lord, to ca' the workmen togeth er." "Why, how many are there?" asked his lordship. "Ou, just Sandy and me," was the quiet rejoinder. The same Lord Lothian, looking about

the garden, directed his gardener's attention to a particular plum-tree, charging him to be careful of the produce of that tree, and send the *whole* of it in marked, as it was of a very particular kind. "Ou," said the gardener, "I'll do that, my lord; there's juist twa o' them."

These dry answers of Newbattle servants remind us of a similar state of communication in a Yester domestic. Lord Tweeddale was very fond of dogs, and on leaving Yester for London, he instructed his head keeper, a quaint bodie, to give him a periodical report of the kennel, and particulars of his favourite dogs. Among the latter was an *especial* one, of the true Skye breed, called "Pickle," from which sobriquet we may form a pretty good judge of his qualities.

It happened one day, in or about the year 1827, that poor Pickle during the absence of his master was taken unwell; and the watchful guardian immediately warned the marquis of the sad fact, (and of the progress of the disease,) which lasted three days — for which he sent the three following laconic despatches —

Yester, May 1st, 18 —.

My Lord,

Pickle's no weel.

Your Lordship's humble servant, etc.

Yester, 2d May 18 —.

My Lord,

Pickle will no do!

I am your Lordship's, etc.

Yester, 3d May 18 —.

My Lord,

Pickle's dead !

I am your Lordship's, etc.

I have heard of an old Forfarshire lady who, knowing the habits of her old and spoilt servant, when she wished a note to be taken without loss of time, held it open and read it over to him, saying, "There, noo, Andrew, ye ken a' that's in't ; noo dinna stop to open it, but just send it aff." Of another servant when sorely tried by an unaccustomed bustle and hurry, a very amusing anecdote has been recorded. His mistress, a woman of high rank, who had been living in much quiet and retirement for some time, was called upon to entertain a large party at dinner. She consulted with Nichol, her faithful servant, and all the arrangements were made for the great event. As the company were arriving, the lady saw Nichol running about in great agitation, and in his shirt sleeves. She remonstrated, and said that as the guests were coming in he must put on his coat. "Indeed, my lady," was his excited reply, "indeed, there's sae muckle rinning here and rinning there, that I'm juist distrackit. I hae cuist'n my coat and waistcoat, and faith I dinna ken how lang I can thole[1] my breeks." There is often a ready wit in this class of character, marked by their replies. I have the following communicated from an ear witness : "Weel, Peggy," said a man to an old family servant, "I wonder yer aye single yet ?"

[1] Bear.

"Me marry," said she indignantly; "I wadna gie my single life for a' the double anes I ever saw."

An old woman was exhorting a servant once about her ways. "You serve the deevil," said she. "Me!" said the girl; "Na, na, I dinna serve the deevil, I serve ae single lady."

A baby was out with the nurse, who walked it up and down a garden. "Is't a laddie or a lassie?" said the gardener. "A laddie," said the maid. "Weel," says he, "I'm glad o' that, for there's ower mony women in the world." "Hech, man," said Jess, "div ye no ken there's aye maist sawn o' the best crap?"

The answers of servants used curiously to illustrate habits and manners of the time, — as the economical modes of her mistress' life were well touched by the lass who thus described her ways and domestic habits with her household: "She's vicious upo' the wark: but eh, she's vary mysterious o' the victualling."

A country habit of making the gathering of the congregation in the churchyard previous to and after divine service an occasion for gossip and business, which I remember well, is thoroughly described in the following: — A lady, on hiring a servant-girl in the country, told her, as a great indulgence, that she should have the liberty of attending the church every Sunday, but that she would be expected to return home always immediately on the conclusion of service. The lady, however, rather unexpectedly found a positive objection raised against this apparently

reasonable arrangement. "Then I canna engadge wi' ye, mem; for 'deed I wadna gie the crack i' the kirkyard for a' the sermon."

The changes that many of us have lived to witness in this kind of intercourse between families and old servants is a part of a still greater change — the change in that modification of the feudal system, the attachment of clans. This, also, from transfers of property and extinction of old families in the Highlands, as well as from more general causes, is passing away; and it includes also changes in the intercourse between landed proprietors and cottagers, and abolition of harvest homes, and such meetings. People are now more independent of each other, and service is become a pecuniary and not a sentimental question. The extreme contrast of that old-fashioned Scottish intercourse of families with their servants and dependents, of which I have given some amusing examples, is found in the modern manufactory system. There the service is a mere question of personal interest. One of our first practical engineers, and one of the first engine-makers in England, told my brother that he employed and paid handsomely on an average 1200 workmen; but that they held so little feeling for him as their master, that not above half a dozen of the number would notice him when passing him, either in the works or out of work hours. Contrast this advanced stage of dependents' indifference with the familiarity of domestic intercourse we have been describing!

CHAPTER IV.

On Humour proceeding from Scottish Language, including Scottish Proverbs.

WE come next to reminiscences chiefly connected with peculiarities which turned upon our Scottish Language, whether contained in words or in expressions. Now this is a very important change, and affects in a greater degree than many persons would imagine, the general modes and aspects of society. I suppose at one time the two countries of England and Scotland were considered as almost speaking *different languages*, and I suppose also, that from the period of the union of the crowns, the language has been assimilating. We see the process of assimilation going on, and ere long amongst persons of education and birth very little difference will be perceptible. With regard to that class a great change has taken place in my time. I recollect old Scottish ladies and gentlemen who regularly *spoke* Scotch. It was not, mark me, speaking English with an accent. No; it was downright Scotch. Every tone and every syllable was Scotch. For example, I recollect

old Miss Erskine of Dun, a fine specimen of a real lady, and daughter of an ancient Scottish house. Many people now would not understand her. She was always *the lady*, notwithstanding her dialect, and to none could the epithet vulgar be less appropriately applied. I speak of thirty years ago, and yet I recollect her accost to me as well as if it were yesterday, "I didna ken ye were i' the toun." Taking words and accent together, an address how totally unlike what we now meet with in society. Some of the old Scottish words which we can remember are delicious; but how strange they would sound to the ears of the present generation! Fancy that in walking from church, and discussing the sermon, a lady of rank should now express her opinion of it by the description of its being, "but a hummelcorn discourse." Many living persons can remember Angus old ladies who would say to their nieces and daughters, "Whatna hummeldoddie o' a mutch hae ye gotten?" meaning a flat and low-crowned cap. In speaking of the dryness of the soil on a road in Lanarkshire, a farmer said, "It stoors[1] in an orr."[2] How would this be as tersely translated into English? The late Duchess of Gordon sat at dinner next an English gentleman who was carving, and who made it a boast that he was thoroughly master of the Scottish language. Her Grace turned to him

[1] Stoor is, Scotticé, *dust in motion*, and there is really no synonyme for it in English.

[2] Hour.

and said, "Rax me a spaul o' that bubbly jock."[1] The unfortunate man was completely *nonplussed*. A Scottish gentleman was entertaining at his house an English cousin who professed himself as rather knowing in the language of the north side of the Tweed. He asked him what he supposed to be the meaning of the expression, "ripin' the ribs."[2] To which he readily answered, "Oh, it describes a very fat man." I profess myself an out and out Scotchman. I have strong national partialities — call them if you will national prejudices. I cherish a great love of old Scottish language. Some of our pure Scottish ballad poetry is unsurpassed in any language for grace and pathos. How expressive, how beautiful are its phrases! You can't translate them. Take an example of power in a Scotch expression, to describe with tenderness and feeling what is in human life. Take one of our most familiar phrases; as thus, — we meet an old friend, we talk over bygone days, and remember many who were dear to us both, once bright and young and gay, of whom some remain, honoured, prosperous, and happy — of whom some are under a cloud of misfortune or disgrace — some are broken in health and spirits — some sunk into the grave; we recal old familiar places — old companions, pleasures, and pursuits; as Scotchmen our hearts are touched with these remembrances of

AULD LANG SYNE.

[1] Reach me a leg of that turkey.

[2] Clearing ashes out of the bars of the grate.

Match me the phrase in English. You can't translate it. The fitness and the beauty lie in the felicity of the language. Like many happy expressions, it is not transferable into another tongue, just like the "simplex munditiis" of Horace, which describes the natural grace of female elegance, or the ἀνηριθμον γελασμα of Æschylus, which describes the bright sparkling of the ocean in the sun.

I think the power of Scottish dialect was happily exemplified by the late Dr. Adam, rector of the High School of Edinburgh, in his translation of the Horatian expression, "desipere in loco," which he turned by the Scotch phrase "Weel-timed daffin'," a translation, however, which no one but a Scotchman could appreciate. The following humorous Scottish translation of an old Latin aphorism has been assigned to the late Dr. Hill of St. Andrews, "*Qui bene cepit dimidium facti fecit.*" The witty Principal expressed in Scotch, "Weel saipet (well soaped) is half shaven."

What mere *English* word could have expressed a distinction so well in such a case as the following? I heard once a lady in Edinburgh objecting to a preacher that she did not understand him. Another lady, his great admirer, insinuated that probably he was too "deep" for her to follow. But her ready answer was, "Na, na, he's no just deep, but he's *drumly*."[1]

We have just received a testimony to the value of our Scottish language from the illustrious Chancellor

[1] Mentally confused. Muddy when applied to water.

of the University of Edinburgh, the force and authority of which no one will be disposed to question. Lord Brougham, in speaking of improvements upon the English language, makes these striking remarks:—

"The pure and classical language of Scotland must on no account be regarded as a provincial dialect, any more than French was so regarded in the reign of Henry V., or Italian in that of the first Napoleon, or Greek under the Roman Empire. Nor is it to be in any manner of way considered as a corruption of the Saxon; on the contrary, it contains much of the old and genuine Saxon, with an intermixture from the Northern nations, as Danes and Norse, and some, though a small portion, from the Celtic. But in whatever way composed, or from whatever sources arising, it is a national language, used by the whole people in their early years, by many learned and gifted persons throughout life, and in which are written the laws of the Scotch, their judicial proceedings, their ancient history, above all, their poetry.

"There can be no doubt that the English language would greatly gain by being enriched with a number both of words and of phrases, or turns of expression, now peculiar to the Scotch. It was by such a process that the Greek became the first of tongues, as well written as spoken. . . .

"Would it not afford means of enriching and improving the English language, if full and accurate glossaries of improved Scotch words and phrases — those successfully used by the best writers, both in prose and verse — were given, with distinct explanation and reference to authorities? This has been done in France and other countries, where some dictionaries accompany the English, in some cases with Scotch synonymes, in others with varieties of expression." *Installation Address*, p. 63.

I cannot help thinking that a change of national

language involves to some extent change of national character. Numerous examples of great power in Scottish phraseology, to express the picturesque, the feeling, the wise, and the humorous, might be taken from the works of Robert Burns, Ferguson, or Allan Ramsay, and which lose their charm altogether when *unscottified.* The speaker certainly seems to take a strength and character from his words. We must now look for specimens of this racy and expressive tongue in the more retired parts of the country. It is no longer to be found in high places. It has disappeared from the social circles of our cities. In my early days the intercourse with the peasantry of Forfarshire, Kincardineshire, and especially of Deeside, was most amusing, not that the things said were so much out of the common, as that the language in which they were conveyed was picturesque, and odd, and taking. And certainly it does appear to me that as the language grows more uniform and conventional, less marked and peculiar in its dialect and expressions, so does the character of those who speak it become so. I have a rich sample of Mid-Lothian Scotch from a young friend in the country, who describes the conversation of an old woman on the property as amusing her by such specimens of genuine Scottish raciness and humour. On one occasion, for instance, the young lady had told her humble friend that she was going to Ireland, and would have to undergo a sea voyage. "Weel, noo, ye dinna mean that! Ance I thocht to gang across to tither

side o' the Queensferry wi' some ither folks to a fair, ye ken ; but juist when e'er I pat my fit in the boat, the boat gie wallop, and my heart gie a loup, and I thocht I'd gang oot o' my judgment athegither, so says I, Na, na, ye gang awa by yoursells to tither side, and I'll bide here till sik times as ye come awa back." When we hear our Scottish language at home, and spoken by our own countrymen, we are not so much struck with any remarkable effects ; but it takes a far more impressive character when heard amongst those who speak a different tongue, and when encountered in other lands. I recollect the late Sir Robert Liston expressing this feeling in his own case. When our ambassador at Constantinople, some Scotchmen had been recommended to him for some purpose of private or of government business ; and Sir Robert was always ready to do a kind thing for a countryman. He found them out in a barber's shop waiting for being shaved in turn. One came in rather late, and seeing he had scarcely room at the end of the seat, addressed his countryman, " Neebour, wad ye sit a bit *wast*." What strong associations must have been called up, by hearing, in a distant land, such an expression in Scottish tones.

We may observe here, that marking the course any person is to take, or the direction in which any object is to be met with by the points of the compass, was a prevailing practice amongst the older Scottish race. There could hardly be a more ludicrous application of the test, than was furnished by an honest

Highlander in describing the direction which his medicine would *not* take. Jean Cumming, of Altyre, who, in common with her three sisters, was a true sœur de la charité, was one day taking her rounds as usual, visiting the poor sick, among whom there was a certain Donald MacQueen, who had been sometime confined to his bed. Jean Cumming, after asking him how he felt, and finding that he was "no better," of course inquired if he had taken the medicine which she had sent him; "Troth no, me lady," he replied. "But why not, Donald," she answered, "it was *very wrong;* how can you expect to get better if you do not help yourself with the remedies which Heaven provides for you." "*V*right or *V*rang," said Donald, "it wou'd na gang *wast* in spite o' me." In all the north country, it is always said, "I'm ganging east or west," etc., and it happened that Donald on his sick bed was lying east and west, his feet pointing to the latter direction, hence his reply to indicate that he could not swallow the medicine!

We may fancy the amusement of the officers of a regiment in the West Indies at the innocent remark of a young lad who had just joined from Scotland. On meeting at dinner, his salutation to his colonel was, "Anither het day, Cornal," as if "het days" were in Barbadoes few and far between, as they were in his dear old stormy cloudy Scotland. Or take the case of a Scottish saying, which indicated at once the dialect and the economical habits of a hardy and struggling race. A young Scotchman, who had been

some time in London, met his friend recently come up from the north to pursue his fortune in the great metropolis. On discussing matters connected with their new life in London, the more experienced visitor remarked upon the greater *expenses* there than in the retired Scottish town which they had left. "Ay," said the other, sighing over the reflection, "When ye get cheenge for a saxpence here, it's soon slippit awa'." I recollect a story of my father's which illustrates the force of dialect, although confined to the inflections of a single monosyllable. On riding home one evening, he passed a cottage or small farm-house, where there was a considerable assemblage of people, and an evident incipient merry-making for some festive occasion. On asking one of the lasses standing about what it was, she answered, "Ou, it's juist a wedding o' Jock Thamson and Janet Fraser." To the question, "Is the bride rich?" there was a plain quiet "Na." "Is she young?" a more emphatic and decided "Naa!" but to the query, "Is she bonny?" a most elaborate and prolonged shout of "Naaa!"

It has been said that the Scottish dialect is peculiarly powerful in its use of *vowels*, and the following dialogue between a shopman and a customer has been given as a specimen. The conversation relates to a plaid hanging at the shop door —

Cus. (inquiring the material), Oo? (wool?)

Shop. Ay, oo (yes, of wool).

Cus. A' oo? (all wool?)

Shop. Ay, a' oo (yes, all wool).
Cus. A' ae oo? (all same wool?)
Shop. Ay, a' *ae* oo (yes, all same wool).

An amusing anecdote of a pithy and jocular reply, comprised in one syllable, is recorded of an eccentric legal Scottish functionary of the last century. An advocate, of whose legal qualifications he had formed rather a low estimate, was complaining to him of being passed over in a recent appointment to the bench, and expressed his sense of the injustice with which he had been treated. He was very indignant at his claims and merit being overlooked in their not choosing him for the new judge, adding with much acrimony, "And I can tell you they might have got a 'waur.'"[1] To which, as if merely coming over the complainant's language again, the answer was a grave "Whaur?"[2] The merit of the impertinence was, that it sounded as if it were merely a repetition of his friend's last words, waur and whaur. It was as if "*echo* answered whaur?" As I have said, the oddity and acuteness of the speaker arose from the manner of expression, not from the thing said. In fact, the same thing said in plain English would be mere commonplace. I recollect being much amused with a dialogue between my brother and his man, the chief manager of a farm which he had just taken, and, I suspect, in a good measure, manager of the *farmer* as well. At any rate he committed to this acute overseer all the practical details; and on the present

[1] Worse. [2] Where.

occasion had sent him to market to dispose of a cow and a pony, a simple enough transaction, and with a simple enough result. The cow was brought back, the pony was sold. But the man's description of it forms the point. "Well, John, have you sold the cow?" "Na, but I *grippit* a chiel for the powny!" The "*grippit*" was here most expressive! Indeed, this word has a significance hardly expressed by any English one, and used to be very prevalent to indicate keen and forcible tenacity of possession; thus a character noted for avarice or sharp looking to self interest, was termed "grippy." In mechanical contrivances, anything taking a close adherence, was called having a gude *grip*. I recollect in boyish days when on Deeside taking wasp nests, an old man looking on was sharply stung by one, and his description was, "Ane o' them's grippit me fine." The following had an indescribable piquancy, which arose from the *Scotticism* of the terms and the manners. Many years ago, when accompanying a shooting party on the Grampians, not with a gun like the rest, but with a botanical box for collecting specimens of mountain plants, the party had got very hot, and very tired, and very cross. On the way home, whilst sitting down to rest, a gamekeeper-sort of attendant, and a character in his way, said, "I wish I was in the dining-room of Fasque." An old laird very testily replied, "Ye'd soon be kickit out o' that;" to which the other replied, not at all daunted, "Weel, weel, then I wadna be far frae the kitchen." A quaint and characteristic

reply, I recollect from another farm-servant. My eldest brother had just been constructing a piece of machinery, which was driven by a stream of water running through the home farm-yard. There was a thrashing machine, a winnowing machine, and circular saw for splitting trees into paling, and other contrivances of a like kind. Observing an old man, who had long been about the place, looking very attentively at all that was going on, he said, "Wonderful things people can do now, Robby?" "Ay," said Robby, "indeed, Sir Alexander, I'm thinking if Solomon was alive noo he'd be thocht naething o'!" But, after all, it was amongst the old ladies that the great abundance of choice pungent Scottish expressions, such as you certainly do not meet with in these days, was to be sought. In their position of society, education either in England, or education conducted by English teachers, has so spread in Scottish families, and intercourse with the south has been so increased, that all these colloquial peculiarities are fast disappearing. Some of the ladies of this older school felt some indignation at the change which they lived to see was fast going on. One of them being asked if an individual whom she had lately seen was "Scotch," answered with some bitterness, "I canna say; ye a' speak sae *genteel* now that I dinna ken wha's Scotch." It was not uncommon to find, in young persons, examples, some years ago, of an attachment to the Scottish dialect, like that of the old lady. In the life of P. Tytler, lately published, there is an account of

his first return to Scotland from a school in England. His family were delighted with his appearance, manners, and general improvement; but a sister did not share this pleasure unmixed, for being found in tears, and the remark being made, "Is he not charming," her reply was, in great distress, "Oh yes, but he speaks English!"

The class of old Scottish ladies marked by so many peculiarities, generally lived in provincial towns, and never dreamt of going from home. Many had never been in London, or had even crossed the Tweed. But as Lord Cockburn's experience goes back farther than mine, and as he had special opportunities of being acquainted with their characteristic peculiarities, I will quote his animated description at page 57 of his memorials. "There was a singular race of old Scotch ladies. They were a delightful set — strong-headed, warm-hearted, and high-spirited — merry even in solitude; very resolute; indifferent about the modes and habits of the modern world, and adhering to their own ways, so as to stand out like primitive rocks above ordinary society. Their prominent qualities of sense, humour, affection, and spirit, were embodied in curious outsides, for they all dressed, and spoke, and did exactly as they chose. Their language, like their habits, entirely Scotch, but without any other vulgarity than what perfect naturalness is sometimes mistaken for." [1]

This is a masterly description of a race now al.

[1] Lord Cockburn's Memorials, p. 58.

but passed away. I have known several of them in my early days ; and amongst them we must look for the racy Scottish peculiarities of diction and of expression which, with them, are also nearly gone. Lord Cockburn has given some illustrations of these peculiarities ; and I have heard others, especially connected with Jacobite partialities, of which I say nothing, as they are in fact rather *strong* for such an occasion as the present. One, however, I heard lately as coming from a Forfarshire old lady of this class, which bears upon the point of "resolute" determination referred to in Lord Cockburn's description. She had been very positive in the disclaiming of some assertion which had been attributed to her, and on being asked if she had not written it, or something very like it, she replied, "Na, na ; I never write onything of consequence — I may deny what I say, but I canna deny what I write."

Mrs. Baird of Newbyth, the mother of our distinguished countryman the late General Sir David Baird, was always spoken of as a grand specimen of the class. When the news arrived from India of the gallant but unfortunate action of '84 against Hyder Ali, in which her son, then Captain Baird, was engaged, it was stated that he and other officers had been taken prisoners and chained together two and two. The friends were careful in breaking such sad intelligence to the mother of Captain Baird. When, however, she was made fully to understand the position of her son and his gallant companions, disdain-

ing all weak and useless expressions of her own grief, and knowing well the restless and athletic habits of her son, all she said was, "Lord pity the chiel that's chained to our Davy."[1]

The ladies of this class had certainly no affectation in speaking of those who came under their displeasure, even when life and death were concerned. I had an anecdote illustrative of this characteristic, in a well-known old lady of the last century, Miss Johnstone of Westerhall. She had been extremely indignant that, on the death of her brother, his widow had proposed to sell off the old furniture of Westerhall. She was attached to it from old associations, and considered the parting with it little short of sacrilege. The event was, however, arrested by death, or, as she describes the result, "the furniture was a' to be roupit, and we couldna persuade her. But before the sale cam on, in God's gude providence, she just clinkit aff hersell." Of this same Miss Johnstone, another characteristic anecdote has been preserved in the family. She came into possession of Hawkhill, near Edinburgh, and died there. When dying, a tremendous storm of rain and thunder came on, so as to shake the house. In her own quaint eccentric spirit, and with no thought of profane or light allusions, she looked up, and, listening to the

[1] It is but due to the memory of "our Davy" to state that "the chiel" to whom he was chained, in writing home to his friends, bore high testimony to the kindness and consideration with which he was treated by Captain Baird.

storm, quietly remarked in reference to her departure, "Ech, sirs! what a nicht for me to be fleeing thro' the air!" Of fine acute sarcasm I recollect hearing an expression from rather a *modern* sample of the class, a charming character, but only to a certain degree answering to the description of the *older* generation. Conversation turning, and with just indignation, on the infidel remarks which had been heard from a certain individual, and on his irreverent treatment of Holy Scripture, all that this lady condescended to say of him was, "Gey impudent of him, I think."

A recorded reply of old Lady Perth to a French gentleman is quaint and characteristic. They had been discussing the respective merits of the cookery of each country. The Frenchman offended the old Scottish peeress by some disparaging remarks on Scottish dishes, and by highly preferring those of France. All she would answer was, "Weel, weel, some fowk like parritch, and some like paddocks."[1]

Of this older race — the ladies who were aged fifty years ago — the description is given by Lord Cockburn in strong and bold outline. I would pretend to nothing more than giving a few illustrative details from my own experience, which may assist the description by adding some practical realities to the picture. Several of them whom I knew in my early days certainly answered to many of those descriptions of Lord Cockburn. Their language and expressions had a zest and peculiarity which is gone,

[1] Frogs.

and which would not, I fear, do for modern life and times.

I have spoken of Miss Erskine of Dun, which is near Montrose. She, however, resided in Edinburgh. But those I knew best had lived many years in the then retired society of a country town. Some were my own relations; and in boyish days (for they had not generally much patience with boys) were looked up to with considerable awe as very formidable personages. Their characters and modes of expression in many respects, remarkably corresponded with Lord Cockburn's description. There was a dry Scottish humour which we fear their successors do not inherit. One of these Montrose ladies had many anecdotes told of her quaint ways and sayings. Walking in the street one day, slippery from frost, she fairly fell down. A young officer with much politeness came forward and picked her up, earnestly asking her at the same time, "I hope, ma'am, you are no worse?" to which she replied, looking at him very steadily, "Indeed, sir, I'm just as little the better." A few days after, she met her military supporter in a shop. He was a fine tall youth, upwards of six feet high, and by way of making some grateful recognition for his late polite attention, she eyed him from head to foot; and as she was of the opinion of the old Scotch lady, who declared she "aye liked bonny fowk," she viewed her young friend with much satisfaction, but which she only evinced by the dry remark, "O'd, ye're a lang lad; God gie ye grace."

I had from a relative or intimate friend of two sisters of this school, well known about Glasgow, an odd account of what it seems from their own statement had passed between them at a country house, where they had attended a sale by auction. As the business of the day went on, a dozen of silver spoons had to be disposed of; and before they were put up for competition, they were, according to the usual custom, handed round for inspection to the company. When returned into the hands of the auctioneer, he found only eleven. In great wrath, he ordered the door to be shut, that no one might escape, and insisted on every one present being searched, to discover the delinquent. One of the sisters, in consternation, whispered to the other, "Esther, ye hae nae gotten the spune?" to which the other replied, "Na; but I hae gotten Mrs. Siddons in my pocket." She had been struck by a miniature of the great actress, and quietly had pocketed it. The cautious reply of the sister was, "Then juist drop her, Esther." One of the sisterhood, a connection of my own, had much of this dry Scottish humour. She had a lodging in the house of a respectable grocer; and on her niece most innocently asking her, "If she was not very fond of her landlord," in reference to the excellence of her apartments and the attention he paid to her comfort, she demurred to the question, on the score of its propriety, by replying, "Fond of my landlord! that would be an *unaccountable* fondness."

An amusing account was given of an interview

and conversation between this lady and the provost of Montrose. She had demurred at paying some municipal tax with which she had been charged, and the provost was anxious to prevent her getting into difficulty on the subject, and kindly called to convince her of the fairness of the claim, and the necessity of paying it. In his explanation he referred back to his own bachelor days when a similar payment had been required from him. "I assure you, ma'am," he said, "when I was in your situation I was called upon in a similar way for this tax;" to which she replied, in quiet scorn, "In my situation! an' whan were ye in my situation — an auld maid leevin' in a flat wi' an ae lass?" But the complaints of such imposts were urged in a very humorous manner by another Montrose old lady, Miss Helen Carnegy of Craigo; she hated paying taxes, and always pretended to misunderstand their nature. One day, receiving a notice of such payment signed by the provost (Thom), she broke out: "I dinna understand thae taxes; but I just think when Mrs. Thom wants a new gown, the provost sends me a tax paper!" The good lady's naïve rejection of the idea that she could be in any sense "fond of her landlord," already referred to, was somewhat in unison with a similar feeling recorded to have been expressed by the late Mr. Wilson, the celebrated Scottish vocalist. He was taking lessons from the late Mr. Finlay Dun, one of the most accomplished musicians of his day. Mr. Dun had just returned from Italy, and, impressed with

admiration of the deep pathos, sentiment, and passion of the Italian school of music, he regretted to find in his pupil so lovely a voice and so much talent losing much of its effect for want of feeling. Anxious, therefore, to throw into his friend's performance something of the Italian expression, he proposed to bring it out by this suggestion : " Now, Mr. Wilson, just suppose that I am your lady-love, and sing to me as you could imagine yourself doing were you desirous of impressing her with your earnestness and affection." Poor Mr. Wilson hesitated, blushed, and under doubt how far such a personification even in his case was allowable, at last remonstrated, " Ay, Mr. Dun, ye forget I'm a married man !"

A case has been reported of a country girl, however, who thought it possible there might be an excess in such scrupulous regard to appearances. On her marriage-day, the youth to whom she was about to be united, said to her in a triumphant tone, " Weel, Jenny, haven't I been unco ceevil," alluding to the fact that during their whole courtship he had never even given her a kiss. Her quiet reply was, " Ou, ay, man ; senselessly ceevil."

One of these Montrose ladies and a sister lived together ; and in a very quiet way they were in the habit of giving little dinner parties, to which occasionally they invited their gentlemen friends. However, gentlemen were not always to be had ; and on one occasion, when such a difficulty had occurred, they were talking over the matter with a friend.

The one lady seemed to consider such an acquisition almost essential to the having a dinner at all. The other, who did not see the same necessity, quietly adding, "But, indeed, oor Jean thinks a man a perfect salvation."

There was occasionally a pawky semi-sarcastic humour in the replies of some of the ladies we speak of that was quite irresistible, of which I have from a friend a good illustration in an anecdote well known at the time. A late well-known member of the Scottish bar, when a youth, was somewhat of a dandy, and, I suppose, somewhat short and sharp in his temper. He was going to pay a visit in the country, and was making a great fuss about his preparing and the putting up his habiliments. His old aunt was much annoyed at all this bustle, and stopped him by the somewhat contemptuous question, "Whaur's this you're gaun, Robby, that ye mak sic a grand wark about yer claes?" The young man lost temper, and pettishly replied, "I'm going to the devil." "'Deed, Robby, then," was the quiet answer, "ye needna be sae nice, he'll juist tak ye as ye are."

Ladies of this class had a quiet mode of expressing themselves on very serious subjects, which indicated their quaint power of description, rather than their want of feeling. Thus, of two sisters, when one had died, it was supposed that she had injured herself by an imprudent indulgence in strawberries and cream, of which she had partaken in the country. A friend was condoling with the surviving sister, and,

expressing her sorrow, had added, "I had hoped your sister was to live many years." To which her relative rejoined — "Leeve! hoo could she leeve! she juist felled[1] hersell at Craigo wi' strawberries and cream!" However, she spoke with the same degree of coolness of her own decease. For when her friend was comforting her in illness, by the hopes that she would, after winter, enjoy again some of their country spring butter, she exclaimed, without the slightest idea of being guilty of any irreverence, "Spring butter! by that time I shall be buttering in heaven." When really dying, and when friends were round her bed, she overheard one of them saying to another, "Her face has lost its colour; it grows like a sheet of paper." The quaint spirit even then broke out in the remark, "Then I'm sure it maun be *broon* paper." A very strong-minded lady of the class, and, in Lord Cockburn's language, "indifferent about modes and habits," had been asking from a lady the character of a cook she was about to hire. The lady naturally entered a little upon her moral qualifications, and described her as a very decent woman; the reply to which was, "Oh, d—n her decency; can she make good collops?" — an answer which would somewhat surprise a lady of Moray Place now, if engaged in a similar discussion of a servant's merits.

I had two grand-aunts living at Montrose at that time — two Miss Ramsays of Balmain. They were somewhat of the severe class — Nelly especially,

[1] Killed.

who was an object rather of awe than of affection. She certainly had a very awful appearance to young apprehensions, from the strangeness of her head gear. Ladies of this class Lord Cockburn has spoken of as having their peculiarities embodied in curious outsides, as they dressed, spoke, and did exactly as they chose. As a sample of such curious outside and dress, my good aunt used to go about the house with an immense pillow strapped over her head — warm but formidable. These two maiden grand-aunts had a niece on a visit, an aunt of mine, who had made what they considered a very imprudent marriage, and where considerable poverty was likely to accompany the step she had taken. The poor niece had to bear many a slap directed to her improvident union, as for example: One day she had asked for a piece of tape for some work she had in hand as a young wife expecting to become a mother. Miss Nelly said with much point, "Ay, Kitty, ye shall get a bit knittin' (*i.e.* a bit of tape). We hae a' thing; we're no married." It was this lady who, by an inadvertent use of a term, shewed what was passing in her mind in a way which must have been quite transparent to the bystanders. At a supper which she was giving, she was evidently much annoyed at the reckless and clumsy manner in which a gentleman was operating upon a ham which was at table, cutting out great lumps, and distributing them to the company. The lady said, in a very querulous tone, "Oh, Mr. *Divet*, will you help Mrs. So and

So?"—divet being a provincial term for a turf or sod cut out of the green, and the resemblance of it to the pieces carved out by the gentleman evidently having taken possession of her imagination. Mrs. Helen Carnegy of Craigo was a thorough specimen of this class of old Scottish ladies. She lived in Montrose, and died in 1818, at the advanced age of 91. She was a Jacobite, and very aristocratic in her feelings, but on social terms with many burghers of Montrose, or Munross, as it was called. She preserved a very nice distinction of addresses, suited to different individuals in the town, according as she placed them in the scale of her consideration. She liked a party at quadrille, and sent out her servant every morning to invite the ladies required to make up the game, and her directions were graduated thus —"Nelly, ye'll ging to Lady Carnegy's, and mak my compliments, and ask the *honour* of her ladyship's company, and that of the Miss Carnegies, to tea this evening; and if they canna come, ging to the Miss Mudies, and ask the *pleasure* of their company; and if they canna come, ye may ging to Miss Hunter and ask the *favour* of her company; and if she canna come, ging to Lucky Spark and *bid her come*."

Some of those ladies, as belonging to the old county families, had very high notions of their own importance, and a great idea of their difference from the burgher families of the town. I am assured of the truth of the following naïve specimen of such family

pride: — One of the olden maiden ladies of Montrose called one day on some ladies of one of the families in the neighbourhood, and on being questioned as to the news of the town said, "News! oh! Bailie ——'s eldest son is to be married." "And pray," was the reply, "and pray, Miss ——, an' fa' ever heard o' a merchant i' the toon o' Montrose *ha'in'* an *eldest son?*"

At the beginning of this century, when the fear of invasion was rife, it was proposed to mount a small battery at the water-mouth by subscription, and Miss Carnegy was waited on by a deputation from the town council. One of them having addressed her on the subject, she heard him with some impatience, and when he had finished, she said, "Are ye ane o' the toon council?" He replied, "I have that honour, ma'm." To which she rejoined, "Ye may hae that *profit*, but honour ye hae nane;" and then to the point, she added, "But I've been tell't that ae day's wark o' twa or three men wad mount the cannon, and that it may be a' dune for twenty shillings, now there's twa punds to ye." The councillor pocketed the money and withdrew. On one occasion, as she sat in an easy chair, having assumed the habits and privileges of age, Mr. Mollison, the minister of the Established Kirk, called on her to solicit for some charity. She did not like being asked for money, and, from her Jacobite principles, she certainly did not respect the Presbyterian Kirk. When he came in, she made an inclination of the head, and he said,

"Don't get up, madam." She replied, "Get up! I wadna rise out of my chair for King George himself, let abee a Whig minister."

It is a curious subject the various shades of Scottish dialect and Scottish expressions, commonly called Scotticisms. We mark in the course of fifty years how some disappear altogether; others become more and more rare, and of all of them we may say, I think, that the specimens of them are to be looked for every year more in the descending classes of society. What was common amongst peers, judges, lairds, advocates, and people of family and education, is now found in humbler ranks of life. There are few persons perhaps who have been born in Scotland, and who have lived long in Scotland, whom a nice southern ear might not detect as from the north. But far beyond such nicer shades of distinction, there are strong and characteristic marks of a Caledonian origin with which some of us have had practical acquaintance. I possess two curious, and now, I believe, rather scarce, publications on the prevalent Scotticisms of our speaking and writing. One is entitled, "Scotticisms designed to Correct Improprieties of Speech and Writing," by Dr. Beattie of Aberdeen. The other is to the same purpose, and is entitled, "Observations on the Scottish Dialect," by the late Right Honourable Sir John Sinclair. Expressions which were common in their days, and used by persons of all ranks, are not known by the rising generation. Many amusing equivoques used to be current,

arising from Scotch people in England applying terms and expressions in a manner rather surprising to Southern ears. Thus, the story was told of a public character dear to the memory of Scotland, Henry Dundas (Viscount Melville), applying to Mr. Pitt for the loan of a horse "*the length* of Highgate," a very common expression in Scotland at that time to signify the distance to which the ride was to extend. Mr. Pitt good humouredly wrote back to say that he was afraid he had not a horse in his possession quite so long as Mr. Dundas had mentioned, but he had sent the longest he had. There is a well-known case of mystification, caused to English ears by the use of Scottish terms, which took place in the House of Peers during the examination of the Magistrates of Edinburgh touching the particulars of the Porteous Mob in 1736. The Duke of Newcastle having asked the Provost with what kind of shot the town-guard, commanded by Porteous, had loaded their muskets, received the unexpected reply, "Ou, juist sic as ane shutes dukes and sic-like fools wi'." The answer was considered as a contempt of the House of Lords, and the poor Provost would have suffered from misconception of his patois, had not the Duke of Argyle (who must have been exceedingly amused) explained that the worthy chief magistrate's expression, when rendered into English, meant to describe the shot used for *ducks and water-fowl*. The circumstance is referred to by Sir W. Scott in the notes to the Heart of Mid-Lothian.

A very curious list may be made of words used in Scotland in a sense which would be quite unintelligible to southerns. Such applications are going out, but I remember them well among the old-fashioned people of Angus and the Mearns quite common in conversation. I subjoin some specimens: —

Bestial signifies amongst Scottish agriculturists cattle generally, the whole aggregate number of beasts on the farm. Again, a Scottish farmer when he speaks of his "hogs," or of buying "hogs," has no reference to swine, but means young sheep, *i.e.*, sheep before they have lost their first fleece.

Discreet does not bear the meaning of prudent or cautious, but of civil, kind, attentive. Such application of the word is said to have been made by Dr. Chalmers to the Bishop of Exeter. Those two eminent individuals had met for the first time at the hospitable house of the late Mr. Murray, the publisher. On the introduction taking place, the bishop expressed himself so warmly as to the pleasure it gave him to meet so distinguished and excellent a man as Dr. Chalmers, that the Doctor was quite overcome, and in a deprecating tone, said, "Oh, I am sure your lordship is very 'discreet.'"

Enterteening has in olden Scottish usage the sense not of amusing, but of interesting. I remember an honest Dandie Dinmont on a visit to Bath. A lady, who had taken a kind charge of him, accompanied him to the theatre, and in the most thrilling scene of Kemble's acting, what is usually termed the dagger

scene in Macbeth, she turned to the farmer with a whisper, "Is not that fine?" to which the confidential reply was, "Oh, mem, it's verra *enterteening!*" Enterteening expressing his idea of the *interesting!*

Pig, in old-fashioned Scotch, was always used for a coarse earthenware jar or vessel. In the life of the late Patrick Tytler, the amiable and gifted historian of Scotland, there occurs an amusing exemplification of the utter confusion of ideas caused by the use of Scottish phraseology. The family, when they went to London, had taken with them an old Scottish servant who had no notion of any terms beside her own. She came in one day greatly disturbed at the extremely backward state of knowledge of domestic affairs amongst the Londoners. She had been to so many shops and could not get "a great broon pig[1] to haud the butter in."

From a relative of the family I have received an account of a still worse confusion of ideas caused by the inquiry of a Mrs. Chisholm of Chisholm, who died in London in 1825, at an advanced age. She had come from the country, to be with her daughter, and was a genuine Scottish lady of the old school. She wished to purchase a table-cloth of a cheque pattern like the squares of a chess or draft-board. Now a draft-board used to be called (as I remember) by old Scotch people a "dam[2]-brod."[3] Accord-

[1] Earthenware vessel.

[2] *dam*, the game of drafts.

[3] *brod*, the board.

ingly, Mrs. Chisholm entered the shop of a linen-draper, and asked to be shown table-linen a *dam-broa pattern.* The shopman, although taken aback by a request, as he considered it, so strongly worded, by a respectable old lady, brought down what he assured her was the largest and widest made. No ; that would not do. She repeated her wish for a dam-brod pattern, and left the shop surprised at the stupidity of the London shopman not having the pattern she asked for.

Silly has in genuine old Scottish use reference to weakness of body only, and not of mind. Before knowing the use of the word, I remember being much astonished at a farmer of the Mearns telling me of the strongest minded man in the county that he was "growing uncommon silly," not insinuating any decline of mental vigour, but only meaning that his bodily strength was giving way.

Frail, in like manner, expresses infirmity of body, and implies no charge of any laxity in moral principle ; yet I have seen English persons looking with considerable consternation when an old-fashioned Scottish lady, speaking of a young and graceful female, lamented her being so *frail.*

Fail is another instance of different use of words. In Scotland it used to be quite common to say of a person whose health and strength had declined, that he had *failed.* To say this of a person connected with mercantile business has a very serious effect upon Southern ears, as implying only bankruptcy

and ruin. I recollect many years ago at Monmouth, a Scottish lady creating much consternation in the mind of the mayor, by saying of a worthy man, the principal banker in the town, whom they both concurred in praising, that she was "sorry to find he was *failing*.

Honest has in Scotch a peculiar application, irrespective of any integrity of moral character. It is a kindly mode of referring to an individual, as we would say to a stranger, "Honest man, would you tell me the way to ——," or as Lord Hermand, when about to sentence a woman for stealing, began, remonstratively, "Honest woman, what garr'd ye steal your neighbour's tub."

Superstitious: A correspondent informs me that in some parts of Mid-Lothian, the people constantly use the word "superstitious" for "bigoted;" thus, speaking of a very keen Free Church person, they will say, "he is awfu' supperstitious."

Kail in England simply expresses cabbage, but in Scotland represents the chief meal of the day. Hence the old-fashioned easy way of asking a friend to dinner was to ask him if he would take his kail with the family. In the same usage of the word, the Scottish proverb expresses distress and trouble in a person's affairs, by saying that "he has got his kail through the reek." In like manner Haddock, in Kincardineshire and Aberdeenshire, used to express the same idea, as the expression is, "Will ye tak your haddock wi' us the day?" There is this difference however in the

local usage, that to say in Aberdeen, Will you take your haddock, implies an invitation to dinner, whilst in Montrose the same expression means an invitation to *supper*. Differences of pronunciation also caused great confusion and misunderstanding. Novels used to be pronounced *novels*; envy *envy*; a cloak was a clock, to the surprise of an English lady, to whom the maid said, on leaving the house, "Mem, winna ye tak the *clock* wi' ye."

There is indeed a case of Scottish pronunciation which adds to the force and copiousness of our language, by discriminating four words, which according to English speaking, are undistinguishable from pronunciation. The words are — wright (a carpenter), to write (with a pen), right (the reverse of wrong), rite (a ceremony). The four are however distinguished in old-fashioned Scotch pronunciation, thus — 1, He's a wiricht; 2, to wireete; 3, richt; 4, rite.

I can remember a peculiar Scottish phrase very commonly used, which now seems to have passed away. I mean the expression "to let on," indicating the notice or observation of some thing, or of some person — For example, "I saw Mr. ——, at the meeting, but I never let on that I knew he was present." A form of expression which has been a great favourite in Scotland, in my recollection, has much gone out of practice, — I mean the frequent use of diminutives, generally adopted either as terms of endearment or of contempt. Thus, it was very common to speak of a person whom you meant rather to un-

dervalue, as a *mannie*, a *bodie*, a *bit bodie*, or a *wee bit mannie*. The Bailie in Rob Roy, when he intended to represent his party as persons of no importance, used the expression, "We are bits o' Glasgow bodies." In a popular child's song, we have the endearing expression, "My wee bit laddie." We have known the series of diminutives, as applied to the canine race, very rich in diminution. There is — 1. A dog; 2. A doggie; 3. A bit doggie; 4. A wee bit doggie; and even 5. A wee bit doggiekie. A correspondent has supplied me with a diminutive, which is of a more extravagant degree of attenuation than any I ever met with. It is this — "A peerie wee bit o' a manikinie." We used to hear such expressions as those, which would not now be reckoned genteel: "Come in and get your bit dinner;" "I hope you are now settled in your ain bit housie." In the Caldwell papers (page 39) we have an interesting case of a diminutive happily applied. It is recorded in the family that Mrs. Mure, on receiving from David Hume, on his death-bed, the copy of his history, which is still in the library of Caldwell, marked "From the Author," she thanked him very warmly, and added in her native dialect, which she and the historian spoke in great purity, "O David, that's a book ye may weel be proud o', but before ye dee ye should burn a' your wee bukies;" to which, raising himself, he replied with some vehemence, half offended, half in joke — "What for should I burn a' my wee bukies?" He was too weak for

discussion. He shook her hand and bade her farewell.

An admirable Scotch expression I recollect from one of the Montrose ladies before referred to. Her niece was asking a great many questions on some point concerning which her aunt had been giving her information, and coming over and over the ground, demanding an explanation how this had happened, and why something else was so and so. The old lady lost her patience, and at last burst forth: "I winna be back-speired noo, Pally Fullerton." Back-speired! how much more pithy and expressive than cross-examined! Another capital expression to mark that a person has stated a point rather under than over the truth, is "The less I lee," as in Guy Mannering, where the precentor exclaims to Mrs. MacCandlish, "Aweel, gudewife, then the less I lee." We have found it a very amusing task collecting together a number of these phrases, and forming them into a connected epistolary composition. We may imagine the sort of puzzle it would be to a young person of the present day—one of what we may call the new school. We will suppose an English young lady, or an English educated young lady, lately married, receiving such a letter as the following from the Scottish aunt of her husband. We may suppose it to be written by a very old lady, who, for the last fifty years, has not moved from home, and has changed nothing of her early days. I can safely affirm that every word of it I have either seen written in a letter, or have heard in ordinary conversation:—

"*Montrose* [1]

"My dear Niece — I am real glad to find my *nevy* has made so good a choice as to have secured you for his wife; and I am sure this step will add much to his comfort, and we *behove* to rejoice at it. He will now look forward to his evening at home, and you will be happy because you will never *want* him. It will be a great pleasure when you hear him in the *trance*, and wipe his feet upon the *bass*. But Willy is not strong, and you must look well after him. I hope you do not let him *snuff* so much as he did. He had a sister, poor thing, who died early. She was remarkably clever, and well read, and most intelligent, but was always uncommonly *silly*.[2] In the autumn of '40 she had a *sair host*, and was aye *speaking through a cold*, and at dinner never did more than to *sup a few family broth*. I am afraid she did not *change her feet* when she came in from the wet one evening. I never *let on* that I observed anything to be wrong; but I remember asking her to come and *sit upon* the fire. But she went out and did not *take* the door with her. She lingered till next spring, when she had a great *income*, and her parents were then too poor to take her south, and she died. I hope you will like the lassie Eppie we have sent you. She is a *discreet girl*, and comes of a decent family. She has a sister *married upon* a Seceding minister at Kirkcaldy. But I hear he expects to be *transportea*

[1] The Scotticisms are printed in Italics.

[2] Delicate in health.

soon. She was brought up in one of the hospitals here. Her father had been a *souter* and a *pawky chiel* enough, but was *doited* for years, and her mother was *sair dottled*. We have been greatly interested in the hospital where Eppie was *educate*, and intended getting up a bazaar for it, and would have asked you to help us, as we were most anxious to raise some additional funds, when one of the bailies died and left it 10,000 pounds, which was really a great *mortification*. I am not a good *hand of write*, and therefore shall stop. I am very tired, and have been *gantin'* for this half hour, and even in correspondence gantin' may be *smittin'*. The *kitchen*[1] is just coming in, and I *feel a smell of tea*, so when I get my *four hours*, that will refresh me and set me up again. — I am your affectionate aunt, ISABEL DINGWALL."

This letter, then, we suppose written by a very old Forfarshire lady to her niece in England, and perhaps the young lady who received this letter might answer it in a style as strange to her aunt as her aunt's is to her, especially if she belonged to that lively class of our young female friends who indulge a little in phraseology which they have imbibed from their brothers or male cousins, who have perhaps, for their amusement, encouraged them in its use. The answer, then, might be something like this; and without meaning to be severe or satirical upon our young lady friends, I may truly say that though

[1] Tea-urn.

I never heard from one young lady all these *fast terms*, I have heard the most of them separately from many: —

"My dear Aunty,—Many thanks for your kind letter and its enclosure. From my not knowing Scotch, I am not quite up to the whole, and some of the expressions I don't twig at all. Willie is absent for a few days, but when he returns home he will explain it; he is quite awake on all such things. I am glad you are pleased that Willie and I are now spliced. I am well aware that you will hear me spoken of in some quarters as a fast young lady, but don't believe them. We are certainly very happy at present. Willie comes home from the office every afternoon at five. We generally take a walk before dinner, and read and work if we don't go out; and I assure you we are very jolly. We don't know many people here yet. It is rather a swell neighbourhood; and if we can't get in with the nobs, depend upon it we will never take up with any society that is decidedly snobby. I daresay the girl you are sending will be very useful to us; our present one is a very slow coach. But we hope some day to sport buttons. My father and mother paid us a visit last week. The governor is well, and, notwithstanding years and infirmities, comes out quite a jolly old cove. He is, indeed, if you will pardon the partiality of a daughter, a regular brick. He says he will help us if we can't get on,

and I make no doubt will in due time fork out the tin. I am busy working a cap for you, dear aunty; it is from a pretty German pattern, and I think when finished will be quite a stunner. I have a shop in Regent Street, where I hire patterns and return them without buying them, which I think a capital dodge. I hope you will sport it for my sake the first tea-party you give.

"I have nothing particular to say, but am always
"Your affectionate niece,
"ELIZA DINGWALL."

"*P. S.*—I am trying to break Willie off his horrid habit of taking snuff. I had rather see him take his cigar when we are walking. You will be told, I daresay, that I sometimes take a weed myself. It is not true, dear aunty."

Before leaving the question of change in Scottish expressions, it may be proper to add a few words on the subject of Scottish *dialects*—*i. e.*, on the differences which exist in different counties or localities in the Scottish tongue itself. These differences used to be as marked as different languages; of course they still exist among the peasantry as before. The change consists in their gradual vanishing from the conversation of the educated and refined. The dialects with which I am most conversant, are the two which present the greatest contrast, viz., the Angus and the Aberdeen, or the slow and broad Scotch—

the quick and sharp Scotch. Whilst the one talks of "buuts and shoon," the other calls the same articles "beets and sheen." With the Aberdonian, "what" is always "fat," or "fatten," "music" is "meesic," "brutes," are "breets;" "What are ye duing," of Southern Scotch, in Aberdeen would be "Fat are ye deein'?"[1] Thus, when a Southerner

[1] Fergusson, nearly a century ago, noted this peculiarity of dialect in his poem of The Leith Races:—

"The Buchan bodies through the beach,
Their bunch of Findrams cry;
And skirl out bauld in Norland speech,
Gude speldans, *fa* will buy."

"Findon," or "Finnan haddies," are split, smoked, and partially dried haddocks. Fergusson, in using the word "*Findrams*," which is not found in our glossaries, has been thought to be in error, but his accuracy has been verified, singularly enough, within the last few days, by a worthy octogenarian Newhaven fisherman, bearing the characteristic name of Flucker, who remarked "that it was a word commonly used in his youth; and, above all," he added, "when Leith Races were held on the sands ye was like to be deeved wi' the lang-tongued hizzies skirling out '*Aell a Findram Speldrains*,' and they jist ca'ed it that to get a better grip o't wi' their tongues."

In Galloway, in 1684, Symson, afterwards an ousted Episcopalian minister (of Kirkinner), notes some peculiarities in the speech of the people in that district. "Some of the countrey people, especially those of the elder sort, do very often omit the letter 'h' after 't' as ting for thing; tree for three; tatch for thatch; wit for with; fait for faith; mout for mouth, etc.; and also, contrary to some north countrey people, they oftentimes pronounce 'w' for 'v,' as serwant for servant; and so they call the months of February, March, and April the *ware*

mentioned the death of a friend, a sharp lady of the granite city asked "Fat deed he o'?" which being utterly incomprehensible to the person asked, another Aberdonian lady kindly explained the question, and put it into language which she supposed *could* not be mistaken, as thus, "Fat did he dee o'?" "Doin" and "dying" being both Aberdonicé "*deeing*," gave rise to an amusing equivoque on the part of my esteemed friend Mr. R. Chambers. In the summer of 1859 there were few successful fields of turnips. Calling with two friends, who were sufferers in this way, on a Brechin farmer who was amongst the fortunate *exceptions*, Mr. Chambers asked him about his turnips, to which he answered, "Ou, they're *deein* rale weel;" when Mr. Chambers affecting to misunderstand as to the phraseology, turned to his two friends and remarked, "You see it's a *perishing* crop everywhere." Another ludicrous interrogatory occurred regarding the death of a Mr. Thomas Thomson. It appeared there were two cousins of this name, both corpulent men. When it was announced that Mr. Thomas Thomson was dead, an Aberdeen friend

quarter, from *ver*.[1] Hence their common proverb, speaking of the stormes in February, '*Winter never comes till ware comes*.'" These peculiarities of language have almost disappeared — the immense influx of Irish emigrants during late years having exercised a perceptible influence over the dialect of Wigtonshire.

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1 *Ver*. The spring months — *e. g.*

"This wes in *ver* quhen wynter tid." — *Barbour*.

of the family asked, "Fatten Thamas Thamson?" He was informed that it was a fat Thomas Thomson, upon which the Aberdeen query naturally arose, "Aye, but fatten fat Thamas Thamson?" A young lady from Aberdeen had been on a visit to Montrose, and was disappointed at finding there a great lack of beaus, and balls, and concerts. This lack was not made up to her by the invitations which she had received to dinner parties. And she thus expressed her feelings on the subject in her native dialect, when asked how she liked Montrose, "Indeed there's neither men nor meesic, and fat care I for meat." The dialect and the local feelings of Aberdeen were said to have produced some amusement in London, when displayed by the lady of the Provost of Aberdeen when accompanying her husband going up officially to the capital. Some persons to whom she had been introduced recommended her going to the opera as one of the sights worthy the attention of a stranger. The good lady, full of the greatness of her situation as wife of the provost, and knowing the sensation her appearance in public occasioned when in her own city, and supposing that a like excitement would accompany her with the London public, rather declined, under the modest plea, "Fat for should I gang to the opera, just to creat a confeesion." An aunt of mine, who knew Aberdeen well, used to tell a traditionary story of two Aberdonian ladies who, by their insinuations against each other, finely illustrated the force of the dialect then

in common use. They had both of them been very attentive to a sick lady in declining health, and on her death each had felt a distrust of the perfect disinterestedness of the other's attention. This created more than a coolness between them, and the bad feeling came out on their passing in the street. The one insinuated her suspicions of unfair dealing by the property of the deceased by ejaculating, as the other passed her, "henny pig[1] and green tea," to which the other retorted, in the same spirit, "Silk coat and negligee!"[2]

I suppose no changes of the last half century have been more remarkable than those which have taken place in the dialect and general manners of our Scottish judges. As a class of society, they have been, of course, *marked men*. Many were celebrated for humour, conviviality, and a considerable degree of eccentricity of manners and habits; many of them were equally remarkable, too, for acute and powerful minds — distinguished for profound knowledge of law, and ready tact in the application of its general principles. I have two anecdotes to shew, that, both in social and judicial life, a remarkable change must have taken place amongst the "fifteen." I am assured that the following scene took place at the *table* of Lord Polkemmet, at a dinner party in his house. When the covers were removed, the dinner was seen to consist of veal broth, a roast fillet of veal, veal

[1] Honey jar. [2] A female garment then in common use.

cutlets, a florentine (an excellent old Scottish dish composed of veal), a calf's head, calf's foot jelly. The worthy judge could not help observing a surprise on the countenance of his guests, and perhaps a simper on some; so he broke out in explanation: "Ou ay, it's a cauf; when we kill a beast we just eat up ae side and doun the tither." The expressions he used to describe his own *judicial* preparations for the bench, were very characteristic: "Ye see I first read a' the pleadings, and then, after letting them wamble in my wame wi' the toddy twa or three days, I gie my ain interlocutor." For a moment suppose such anecdotes to be told now of any of our high legal functionaries. Imagine the feelings of surprise that would be called forth were the present Justice-Clerk to adopt such imagery in describing the process of preparing *his* legal judgment on a difficult case in his court!

In regard to the wit of the Scottish *bar*. It is a subject which I do not pretend to illustrate. It would require a volume for itself. One anecdote, however, I cannot resist, and I record it as forming a striking example of the class of Scottish humour which, with our dialect, has lost its distinctive characteristics. John Clerk (afterwards a judge by the title of Lord Eldin), was arguing a Scotch appeal case before the House of Lords. His client claimed the use of a mill-stream by prescriptive right. Mr. Clerk spoke broad Scotch, and argued that "the *watter* had rin that way for forty years. Indeed

naebody kenned how long, and why should his client now be deprived of the watter, etc." The Chancellor, much amused at the pronunciation of the Scottish advocate, in a rather bantering tone, asked him, "Mr. Clerk, do you spell water in Scotland with two t's?" Clerk, a little nettled at this hit at his national tongue, answered, "Na, my lord, we dinna spell watter (making the word as short as he could) wi' twa t's. But we spell mainners (making the word as long as he could) wi' twa n's."

Under this head of Scottish dialect, language, and phraseology, we naturally introduce some notice of that most interesting subject connected with our national literature which belongs to Scottish PROVERBIAL expressions. It is an old remark, that the characteristics of a people are always found in such sayings, and the expression of Bacon has been often quoted — "The genius, wit, and wisdom of a nation are discovered by their proverbs." Now, as there can be no doubt that there are proverbs exclusively Scottish, and that as in them we find also many traits of Scottish character, and many peculiar forms of Scottish thought and Scottish language, sayings of this kind, once so familiar, should have a place in our Scottish reminiscences. Indeed, proverbs are literally, in many instances, become *reminiscences* They now seem to belong to that older generation whom we recollect, and who used them in conversation freely and constantly. To strengthen an argument, or illustrate a remark by a proverb, was then a

common practice in conversation. Their use, however, is now considered vulgar, and their formal application is almost prohibited by the rules of polite society. Lord Chesterfield denounced the practice of quoting proverbs as a palpable violation of all polite refinement in conversation. Notwithstanding all this, we acknowledge having much pleasure in recalling our national proverbial expressions. They are full of character, and we find amongst them important truths, expressed forcibly, wisely, and gracefully.

All nations have their proverbs, and a vast number of books have been written on the subject. We find, accordingly, that collections have been made of proverbs considered as belonging peculiarly to Scotland. The collections to which I have had access are the following: —

1. The fifth edition, by Balfour, of "Ray's Complete Collection of English proverbs," in which is a separate collection of those which are considered Scottish Proverbs — 1813. Ray professes to have taken these from Fergusson's work mentioned below.

2. A Complete Collection of Scottish Proverbs explained and made intelligible to the English reader, by James Kelly, M.A., published in London 1721.

3. Scottish Proverbs gathered together by David Fergusson, sometime minister at Dunfermline, and put *ordine alphabetico* when he departed this life anno 1598. Edinburgh, 1641.

4. A Collection of Scots Proverbs, dedicated to the Tenantry of Scotland, by Allan Ramsay. This collection is found in the edition of his Poetical Works, 3 vols. post octavo, Edin., 1818, but is not in the handsome edition of 1800. London, 2 vols. 8vo.[1]

5. Scottish Proverbs, collected and arranged by Andrew Henderson. With an Introductory Essay by W. Motherwell. Edin. 1832.

6. The Proverbial Philosophy of Scotland, an address to the School of Arts, by William Stirling of Keir, M.P. Stirling and Edin. 1855.

The collection of Ray, the great English naturalist, is well known. The two first editions, published at Cambridge in 1670 and 1678, were by the author; subsequent editions were by other editors.

The work by James Kelly professes to collect Scottish proverbs only. It is a volume of nearly 400 pages, and contains a short explanation or commentary attached to each, and often parallel sayings from other languages.[2] Mr. Kelly bears ample testimony to the extraordinary free use made of proverbs in his time by his countrymen and by himself. He says that "there were current in society upwards of 3000 proverbs, exclusively Scottish." He adds, "the

[1] This was pointed out to me by Sir John Melville, who kindly supplied me with the 3 volume edition.

[2] Amongst many acts of kindness and essential assistance which I have received and am constantly receiving from my friend Mr. Hugh James Rollo, I owe my introduction to this interesting Scottish volume, now I believe rather scarce.

Scots are wonderfully given to this way of speaking, and as the consequence of that, abound with proverbs, many of which are very expressive, quick, and home to the purpose; and, indeed, this humour prevails universally over the whole nation, especially among the better sort of the commonalty, none of whom will discourse with you any considerable time, but he will affirm every assertion and observation with a Scottish proverb. To that nation I owe my birth and education; and to that manner of speaking, I was used from my infancy, to such a degree that I became in some measure remarkable for it." This was written in 1721, and we may see from Mr. Kelly's account what a change has taken place in society as regards this mode of intercourse. Our author states that he has "omitted in his collection many popular proverbs which are very pat and expressive," and adds as his reason, that "since it does not become a man of manners to use them, it does not become a man of my age and profession to write them." What was Mr. Kelly's profession or what his age does not appear from any statements in this volume; but, judging by many proverbs which he has *retained*, those which consideration of years and of profession induced him to omit, must have been bad indeed, and unbecoming for *any* age or *any* profession.[1] The third collection by Mr. Fergusson is mentioned by Kelly as the only one which had been

[1] Kelly's book is constantly quoted by Jamieson, and is, indeed, an excellent work for the study of good old Scotch.

made before his time, and that he had not met with it till he had made considerable progress in his own collection. The book is now extremely rare, and fetches a high price. By the great kindness of the learned librarian, I have been permitted to see the copy belonging to the library of the Writers to the Signet. It is the first edition and very rare. A quaint little thin volume, such as delight the eyes of true bibliomaniacs, unpaged, and published at Edinburgh, 1641 — although on the title-page the proverbs are said to have been collected at Mr. Fergusson's death, 1598.[1] There is no preface or notice by the author, but an address from the printer, "to the merrie, judicious, and discreet reader."

The proverbs, amounting to 945, are given without any comment or explanation; many of them are of a very antique cast of language; indeed some would be to most persons quite unintelligible without a lexicon.

The printer, in this address, "to the merrie, judicious, and discreet reader," refers in the following quaint expressions to the author: — "Therefore manie in this realme that hath hard of David Fergusson, sometime minister at Dunfermline, and of his quick answers and speeches, both to great persons and others inferiours, and hath heard of his proverbs which hee gathered together in his time, and now we put downe according to the order of the alpha-

[1] This probably throws back the collection to about the middle of the century.

bet; and manie of all ranks of persons, being verie desirous to have the said proverbs, I have thought good to put them to the presse for thy better satisfaction. . . . I know that there may be some that will say and marvell that a minister should have taken pains to gather such proverbs together; but they that knew his forme of powerfull preaching the word, and his ordinar talking, ever almost using proverbiall speeches, will not finde fault with this that hee hath done. And whereas there are some old Scottish words not in use now, bear with that, because if ye alter those words, the proverb will have no grace; and so, recommending these proverbs to thy good use, I bid thee farewell."

I now subjoin a few of Fergusson's Proverbs, verbatim, which are of a more obsolete character, and have appended explanations, of the correctness of which, however, I am not quite confident: —

A year a nurish,[1] *seven year a da*.[2] Refers, I presume, to fulfilling the maternal office.

Anes payit never cravit. Debts once paid give no more trouble.

All wald[3] *have all, all wald forgie*.[4] Those who exact much should be ready to concede.

A gangang[5] *fit*[6] *is aye*[7] *gettin* (*gin*[8] *it were but a thorn*), or, as it sometimes run, *gin it were but a broken tae, i. e.*, toe. A man of industry will certainly get a living, though the proverb is often

[1] Nurse. [2] Daw, a slut. [3] Would. [4] Forgive. [5] Going or moving. [6] Foot. [7] Always. [8] If.

applied to those who went abroad and got a mischief when they might safely have stayed at home. — (Kelly.)

All crakes,[1] *all bears*.[2] Spoken against bullies who keep a great hectoring, and yet, when put to it, tamely pocket an affront. — (Kelly.)

Bourd[3] *not wi' bawtie*.[4] (*lest he bite you*). Do not jest too familiarly with your superiors (Kelly), or with dangerous characters.

Bread's house skailed never.[5] While people have bread they need not give up housekeeping. Spoken when one has bread and wishes something better. — (Kelly.)

Crabbit[6] *was and cause had*. Spoken ironically of persons put out of temper without adequate cause.

Dame, deem[7] *warily* (*ye watna*[8] *wha wytes*[9] *yersell*). — Spoken to remind those who pass harsh censures on others that they may themselves be censured.

Efter lang mint[10] *never dint*.[11] Spoken of long and painful labour producing little effect. Kelly's reading is "*Lang mint little dint*." Spoken when men threaten much and dare not execute. — (Kelly.)

Fill fou[12] *and haud*[13] *fou maks a stark*[14] *man*. In Border language a *stark* man was one who takes and keeps boldly.

[1] Boasters. [2] Used as cowards (?). [3] Jest. [4] A dog's name. [5] To skail house, to disfurnish. [6] Being angry or cross. [7] Judge. [8] Know not. [9] Blames. [10] To aim at. [11] A stroke. [12] Full. [13] Hold. [14] Potent or strong.

He that crabbs[1] *without cause should mease*[2] *without mends.*[3] Spoken to remind those who are angry without cause, that they should not be particular in requiring apologies from others.

He is worth na weill that may not bide na wae. He deserves not the sweet that will not taste the sour. He does not deserve prosperity who cannot meet adversity.

Kame[4] *sindle*[5] *kame sair.*[6] Applied to those who forbear for a while, but when once roused can act with severity.

Kamesters[7] *are aye creeshie.*[8] It is usual for men o look like their trade.

Let alone makes mony lurden.[9] Want of correction makes many a bad boy. — (Kelly.)

Mony tynes[10] *the half mark*[11] *whinger*[12] (*for the halfe pennie whang.*)[13] Another version of penny wise and pound foolish.

Na plie[14] *is best.*

Reavers[15] *should not be rewers.*[16] Those who are so fond of a thing as to snap at it, should not repent when they have got it. — (Kelly.)

1 Is angry. 2 Settle. 3 Amends. 4 Comb. 5 Seldom. 6 Painfully. 7 Wool combers. 8 Greasy. 9 Worthless fellow. 10 Loses. 11 Sixpenny.

12 A sort of dagger or hanger which seems to have been used both at meals as a knife and in broils —

> And *whingers* now in friendship bare,
> The social meal to part and share,
> Had found a bloody sheath. — *Lay of the Last Minstrel*

13 Thong. 14 No lawsuit. 15 Robbers 16 Rue, to repent.

Sokand seill is best. The interpretation of this proverb is not obvious, and later writers do not appear to have adopted it from Fergusson. It is quite clear that Sok or Sock is the ploughshare. Seil is happiness, as in Kelly. "Seil comes not till sorrow be o'er;" and in Aberdeen they say, "Seil o' your face," to express a blessing. My reading is "the plough and happiness the best lot." The happiest life is the healthy country one. See Robert Burns' spirited song with the chorus —

> "Up wi' my ploughman lad,
> And hey my merry ploughman,
> Of a' the trades that I do ken,
> Commend me to the ploughman."

A somewhat different reading of this very obscure and now indeed obsolete proverb has been suggested by an esteemed and learned friend—"I should say rather it meant that the ploughshare, or country life, accompanied with good luck or fortune, was best; *i. e.*, that industry coupled with good fortune (good seasons and the like), was the combination that was most to be desired. *Sæl* in Anglo-Saxon as a noun means *opportunity*, and then good luck, happiness, etc.

There's mae[1] *madines*[2] *nor makines.*[3] Girls are more plentiful in the world than hares.

Ye bried[4] *of the gouk,*[5] *ye have not a rhyme*[6] *but ane.* Applied to persons who tire every body by constantly harping on one subject.

[1] More. [2] Maidens. [3] Hares. [4] Take after. [5] Cuckoo. [6] Note.

The collection by Allan Ramsay is very good, and professes to correct the errors of former collectors. I have now before me the *first edition*, Edinburgh, 1737, with the appropriate motto on the title-page, "That maun be true that a' men say." This edition contains proverbs only, the number being 2464. Some proverbs in this collection I do not find in others, and one quality it possesses in a remarkable degree, — it is very Scotch. The language of the proverbial wisdom has the true Scottish flavour; not only is this the case with the proverbs themselves, but the dedication to the tenantry of Scotland, prefixed to the collection, is written in pure Scottish dialect. From this dedication I make an extract, which falls in with our plan of recording Scotch reminiscences, as Allan Ramsay there states the great value set upon proverbs in his day, and the importance which he attaches to them as teachers of moral wisdom, and as combining amusement with instruction. The prose of Allan Ramsay has, too, a spice of his poetry in its composition. His dedication is, To the tenantry of Scotland, farmers of the dales, and storemasters of the hills —

"Worthy friends — The following hoard of wise sayings and observations of our forefathers, which have been gathering through mony bygane ages, I have collected with great care, and restored to their proper sense. . . .

"As naething helps our happiness mair than to have the mind made up wi' right principles, I desire

you, for the thriving an' pleasure of you and yours, to use your een and lend your lugs to these guid *auld saws*, that shine wi' wail'd sense, and will as lang as the warld wags. Gar your bairns get them by heart; let them have a place among your family-books, and may never a window sole through the country be without them. On a spare hour, when the day is clear, behind a ruck, or on the green howm, draw the treasure frae your pouch, an' enjoy the pleasant companion. Ye happy herds, while your hirdsell are feeding on the flowery braes, you may eithly make yoursells master of the haleware. How usefou' will it prove to you (wha hae sae few opportunities of common clattering) when ye forgather wi' your friends at kirk or market, banquet or bridal! By your proficiency you'll be able, in the proverbial way, to keep up the saul of a conversation that is baith blyth an' usefou'."

Mr. Henderson's work is a compilation from those already mentioned. It is very copious, and the introductory essay contains some excellent remarks upon the wisdom and wit of Scottish proverbial sayings.

Mr. Stirling's address, like everything he writes, indicates a minute and profound knowledge of his subject, and is full of picturesque and just views of human nature. He attaches much importance to the teaching conveyed in proverbial expressions, and recommends his hearers even still to collect such proverbial expressions as may yet linger in conversation,

because, as he observes, "If it is not yet registered, it is possible that it might have died with the tongue from which you took it, and so have been lost for ever." "I believe," he adds," the number of good old saws still floating as waifs and strays on the tide of popular talk to be much greater than might at first appear."

One remark is applicable to all these collections, viz., that out of so large a number there are many of them on which we have little grounds for deciding that they are *exclusively* Scottish. In fact, some are mere translations of proverbs adopted by many nations; some of universal adoption. Thus we have—

A burnt bairn fire dreads.
Ae swallow makes nae simmer.
Faint heart neer wan fair lady.
Ill weeds wax weel.
Mony smas mak a muckle.
O twa ills chuse the least.
Set a knave to grip a knave.
Twa wits are better than ane.
There's nae fule to an auld fule.
Ye canna make a silk purse o' a sow's lug.
Ae bird i' the hand is worth twa fleeing.
Mony cooks neer made gude kail.

Of numerous proverbs such as these, some may or may not be original in the Scottish. Mr. Stirling remarks, that many of the best and oldest proverbs may be common to all people — may have occurred to all. In our national collections, therefore, some of the proverbs recorded may be simply translations into Scotch of what have been long considered the prop-

erty of other nations. Still, I hope, it is not a mere national partiality to say that many of the common proverbs *gain* much by such translation from other tongues. All that I would attempt now is, to select some of our more popular proverbial sayings, which many of us can remember as current amongst us, and were much used by the late generation in society, and to add a few from the collections I have named, which bear a very decided Scottish stamp either in turn of thought or in turn of language.

I remember being much struck the first time I heard the application of that pretty Scottish saying regarding a fair bride. I was walking in Montrose, a day or two before her marriage, with a young lady a connection of mine, who merited this description, when she was kindly accosted by an old friend, an honest fishwife of the town, "Weel, Miss Elizabeth, hae ye gotten a' yer claes ready;" to which the young lady modestly answered, "Oh, Janet, my claes are soon got ready;" and Janet replied, in the old Scottish proverb, "Ay, weel, *a bonny bride's sune buskit.*"[1] In the old collection, an addition less sentimental is made to this proverb, *A short horse is sune wispit.*[2]

To encourage strenuous exertions to meet difficult circumstances, is well expressed by *Setting a stout heart to a stey brae.* This mode of expressing that the worth of a handsome woman outweighs even her beauty has a very Scottish character — *She's better*

[1] Attired. [2] Curried.

than she's bonny. The opposite of this was expressed by a Highlander of his own wife, when he somewhat ungrammatically said of her, "*She's bonnier than she's better.*"

The frequent evil to harvest operations from autumnal rains and fogs in Scotland, is well told in the saying, *A dry summer ne'er made a dear peck.*

There can be no question as to country in the following, which seems to express generally that persons may have the name and appearance of greatness without the reality — *A' Stuarts are na sib*[1] *to the king.*

There is an excellent Scottish version of the common proverb, "He that's born to be hanged will never be drowned." — *The water will never warr*[2] *the widdie*, i.e., never cheat the gallows. This saying received a very naïve practical application during the anxiety and alarm of a storm. One of the passengers, a good simple-minded minister, was sharing the alarm that was felt round him, until, spying one of his parishioners, of whose ignominious end he had long felt persuaded, exclaimed to himself, "O, we are all safe now," and accordingly accosted the poor man with strong assurances of the great pleasure he had in seeing him on board.

It's ill getting the breeks aff the Highlandman, is a proverb that savours very strong of a Lowland Scotch origin. Having suffered loss at the hands of their neighbours from the hills, this was a mode of

[1] Related. [2] Outrun.

expressing the painful truth, that there was little hope of obtaining redress from those who had not the means of supplying it.

Proverbs connected with the bagpipes I set down as legitimate Scotch, as thus, *Ye are as lang in tuning your pipes as anither wad play a spring.*[1] You are as long in setting about a thing as another would be in doing it.

There is a set of Scottish proverbs which we may group together as containing one quality in common, and that in reference to the Evil Spirit, and to his agency in the world. This is a reference often, I fear, too lightly made; but I am not conscious of anything deliberately profane or irreverent in the following: —

The deil's nae sae ill as he's caaed. The most of people may be found to have some redeeming good point; applied in "Guy Mannering" by the Deacon to Gilbert Glossin, upon his intimating his intention to come to his shop soon for the purpose of laying in his winter stock of groceries.

To the same effect, *It's a sin to lee on the deil.* Even of the worst people, *truth* at least should be spoken.

He should hae a lang shafted spune that sups kail wi' the deil. He should be well guarded and well protected that has to do with cunning and unprincipled men.

Lang ere the deil dee by the dyke-side. Spoken

1 Tune.

when the improbable death of some powerful and ill-disposed person is talked of.

Let ae deil ding anither. Spoken when two bad persons are at variance over some evil work.

The deil's bairns hae deil's luck. Spoken enviously when ill people prosper.

The deil's a busy bishop in his ain diocie. Bad men are sure to be active in promoting their own bad ends. A quaint proverb of this class I have been told of as coming from the reminiscences of an old lady of quality, to recommend a courteous manner to every one: *It's aye gude to be ceevil, as the auld wife said when she beckit*[1] *to the deevil.*

Raise nae mair deils than ye are able to lay. Provoke no strifes which ye may be unable to appease.

The deil's aye gude to his ain. A malicious proverb, spoken as if those whom we disparage were deriving their success from bad causes.

Ye wad do little for God an the deevil was dead. A sarcastic mode of telling a person that fear, rather than love or principle, is the motive to his good conduct.

In the old collection already referred to, is a proverb which I quote unwillingly, and yet which I do not like to omit. It is doubtful against whom it took its origin, whether as a satire against the decanal order in general, or against some obnoxious dean in particular: *The Deil an the Dean begin wi' ae letter. When the Deil has the Dean the kirk will be the better.*

[1] Curtsied.

The deil's gane ower Jock Wabster, is a saying which I have been accustomed to in my part of the country from early years. It expresses generally misfortune or confusion, but I am not quite sure of the *exact* meaning, or who is represented by Jock Wabster. It was a great favourite with Sir Walter Scott, who quotes it twice in "Rob Roy." Allan Ramsay introduces it in the "Gentle Shepherd" to express the misery of married life when the first dream of love has passed away:—

> "The 'Deil gaes ower Jock Wabster,' hame grows hell,
> When Pate misca's ye waur than tongue can tell."

There are two very pithy Scottish proverbial expressions for describing the case of young women losing their chance of good marriages, by setting their aims too high. Thus an old lady, speaking of her grand-daughter having made what she considered a poor match, described her as having "lookit at the moon, and lichtit[1] in the midden."

It is recorded again of a celebrated beauty, Becky Monteith, that being asked how she had not made a good marriage, having replied, "Ye see, I wadna hae the walkers, and the riders gaed by."

It's ill to wauken sleeping dogs. It is bad policy to rouse dangerous and mischievous people, who are for the present quiet.

It is nae mair pity to see a woman greit nor to see a goose go barefit. A harsh and ungallant reference to

[1] Fell.

the facility with which the softer sex can avail themselves of tears to carry a point.

A Scots mist will weet an Englishman to the skin. A proverb evidently of Caledonian origin, arising from the frequent complaints made by English visitors of the heavy mists which hang about our hills, and which are found to annoy the southern traveller as it were downright rain.

Keep your ain fish guts to your ain sea maws. This was a favourite proverb of Sir Walter Scott when he meant to express the policy of first considering the interests that are nearest home. The saying savours of the fishing population of the east coast.

A Yule feast may be done at Pasch. Festivities, although usually practised at Christmas, need not, on suitable occasions, be confined to any season.

It's better to sup wi' a cutty than want a spune. Cutty means anything short, stumpy, and not of full growth; frequently applied to a short-handled horn spoon. As Meg Merrilees says to the bewildered Dominie, "If ye dinna eat instantly, by the bread and salt, I'll put it down your throat wi' the *cutty spune.*"

"*Fules mak feasts and wise men eat 'em*, my Lord." This was said to a Scottish nobleman on his giving a great entertainment, and who readily answered, "Ay, and *Wise men make proverbs ana fools repeat 'em.*"

A green Yule[1] *and a white Pays*[2] *mak a fat kirkyard.* A very coarse proverb, but may express a

[1] Christmas. [2] Pasch or Easter.

general truth as regards the effects of season on the human frame. Another of a similar character is, *An air*[1] *winter maks a sair*[2] *winter.*

Wha will bell the cat? The proverb is used in reference to a proposal for accomplishing a difficult or dangerous task, and alludes to the fable of the poor mice proposing to put a bell about the cat's neck, that they might be apprised of his coming. The historical application is well known. When the nobles of Scotland proposed to go in a body to Stirling to take Cochrane, the favourite of James the Third, and hang him, the Lord Gray asked, "It is well said, but wha will bell the cat?" The Earl of Angus accepted the challenge, and effected the object. To his dying day he was called Archibald Bell-the-Cat.

Ye hae tint the tongue o' the trump. "Trump" is a Jew's harp. To lose the tongue of it is to lose what is essential to its sound.

Meat and mass hinders nae man. Needful food, and suitable religious exercises, should not be spared under greatest haste.

Ye fand it whar the highland man fand the tangs (*i.e.*, at the fireside). A hit at our mountain neighbours, who occasionally took from the Lowlands — as having found — something that was never *lost.*

His head will ne'er fill his father's bonnet. A picturesque way of expressing that the son will never equal the influence and ability of his sire.

[1] Early. [2] Severe.

His bark is waur nor his bite. A good-natured apology for one who is good-hearted and rough in speech.

Do as the cow of Forfar did, tak a standing drink. This proverb relates to an occurrence which gave rise to a law-suit, and a whimsical legal decision. A woman in Forfar, who was brewing, set out her tub of beer to cool. A cow came by and drank it up. The owner of the cow was sued for compensation, but the bailies of Forfar, who tried the case, acquitted the owner of the cow on the ground that the farewell drink, called in the Highlands the *dochan doris*[1] or stirrup cup, taken by the guest standing at the door, was never charged, and as the cow had taken but a standing drink outside, it could not, according to Scottish usage, be chargeable. Sir Walter Scott has humorously alluded to this circumstance in the notes to "Waverley," but has not mentioned it as the subject of an old Scotch proverb.

Bannocks are better nor nae kind o' bread. Evidently Scottish. Better have oatmeal cakes to eat than be in want of wheaten loaves.

Folly is a bonny dog. Meaning, I suppose, that many are imposed upon by the false appearances and attractions of vicious pleasures.

The e'ening brings a' hame, is an interesting saying, meaning, that the evening of life, or the approach

[1] The proper orthography of this expression is deoch-an-doruis (or dorais). *Deoch*, a drink; *an*, of the; *doruis* or *aorais*, possessive case of dorus or doras, a door.

of death, softens many of our political and religious differences. I do not find this proverb in the older collections, but Mr. Stirling justly calls it "a beautiful proverb, which, lending itself to various uses, may be taken as an expression of faith in the gradual growth and spread of large-hearted Christian charity, the noblest result of our happy freedom of thought and discussion." The literal idea of the "e'ening bringing a' hame," has a high and illustrious antiquity, as in the fragment of Sappho, Εσπερε, παντα φὲρεις — φὲρεις ὄϊν (or οἶνον) φὲρεις αἶγα, φὲρεις ματὲρι παῖδα — which is thus paraphrased by Lord Byron in "Don Juan," iii. 107 : —

> O Hesperus! thou bringest all good things —
> Home to the weary, to the hungry cheer;
> To the young bird the parent's brooding wings,
> The welcome stall to the o'erlaboured steer; etc.
> Thou bring'st the child, too, to the mother's breast.

A similar graceful and moral saying inculcates an acknowledgment of gratitude for the past favours which we have enjoyed when we come to the close of the day or the close of life —

Ruse[1] *the fair day at e'en.*

But a very learned and esteemed friend has suggested another reading of this proverb, in accordance with the celebrated saying of Solon (Arist. Eth. N. I. 10): Κατὰ Σόλωνα χρεὼν τέλος ὁρᾶν — Do not praise the fairness of the day *till* evening; do not call the life happy *till*

[1] Praise.

you have seen the close; or, in other matters, do not boast that all is well till you have conducted your undertaking to a prosperous end.

Let him tak a spring on his ain fiddle. Spoken of a foolish and unreasonable person as if to say, "We will for the present allow him to have his own way." Bailie Nicol Jarvie quotes the proverb with great bitterness, when he warns his opponent that *his* time for triumph will come ere long, — "Aweel, aweel, sir, you're welcome to a tune on your ain fiddle; but see if I dinna gar ye dance till't afore it's dune."

The kirk is meikle, but ye may say mass in ae end o't; or, as I have received it in another form, "If we canna preach in the kirk, we can sing mass in the quire." This intimates, where something is alleged to be too much, that you need take no more than what you have need for. I heard the proverb used in this sense by Sir Walter Scott at his own table. His son had complained of some quaighs which Sir Walter had produced for a dram after dinner, that they were too large. His answer was, "Well, Walter, as my good mother used to say, if the kirk is ower big, just sing mass in the quire." Here is another reference to kirk and quire — *He rives*[1] *the kirk to theik*[2] *the quire.* Spoken of unprofitable persons, who, in the English proverb, "rob Peter to pay Paul."

The king's errand may come the cadger's gate yet. A great man may need the service of a very mean one.

[1] Tears. [2] Thatch.

The maut is aboon the meal. His liquor has done more for him than his meat. The man is drunk.

Mak a kirk and a mill o't. Turn a thing to any purpose you like; or rather, spoken sarcastically, Take it, and make the best of it.

Like a sow playing on a trump. No image could be well more incongruous than a pig performing on a Jew's harp.

Mair by luck than gude guiding. His success is due to his fortunate circumstances, rather than to his own discretion.

He's not a man to ride the water wi'. A common Scottish saying to express you cannot trust such an one in trying times. May have arisen from the districts where fords abounded, and the crossing them was dangerous.

He rides on the riggin o' the kirk. The riggin being the top of the roof, the proverb used to be applied to those who carried their zeal for church matters to the extreme point.

Leal heart never leed, well expresses that an honest loyal disposition will scorn, under all circumstances, to tell a falsehood.

A common Scottish proverb, *Let that flee stick to the wa'*, has an obvious meaning, — "Say nothing more on that subject." But the derivation is not obvious.[1] In like manner, the meaning of *He that*

[1] It has been suggested, and with much reason, that the reference is to a flee sticking on a wet or a newly painted wall;

will to Cupar maun to Cupar, is clearly that if a man is obstinate, and bent upon his dangerous course, he must take it. But why Cupar? and whether is it the Cupar of Angus or the Cupar of Fife?

Kindness creeps where it canna gang, prettily expresses that where love can do little it will do that little though it cannot do more.

In my part of the country a ridiculous addition used to be made to the common Scottish saying, *Mony a thing's made for the pennie*, i. e., many contrivances are thought of to get money. The addition is, "As the old woman said when she saw a black man," — taking it for granted that he was an ingenious and curious piece of mechanism made for profit.

Bluid is thicker than water, is a proverb which has a marked Scottish aspect, as meant to vindicate those family predilections to which, as a nation, we are supposed to be rather strongly inclined.

There's aye water where the stirkie[1] *drouns.* Where certain effects are produced, there must be some causes at work — a proverb used to shew that a universal popular suspicion as to an obvious effect must be laid in truth.

Better a finger aff than aye waggin'. This proverb I remember as a great favourite with many

this is corroborated by the addition in "Rob Roy," "When the dirt's dry, it will rub out," which seems to point out the meaning and derivation of the proverb.

[1] A young bullock.

Scotch people. Better experience the worst, than have an evil always pending.

Cadgers are aye cracking o' crook-saddle's[1] has a very Scottish aspect, and signifies that professional men are very apt to talk too much of their professions.

As sure's deeth. A common Scottish proverbial expression to signify either the truth or certainty of a fact, or to pledge the speaker to a performance of his promise. In the latter sense an amusing illustration of faith in the superior obligation of this asseveration to any other, is recorded in the "Eglinton Papers."[2] The Earl one day found a boy climbing up a tree, and called him to come down. The boy declined, because, he said, the Earl would thrash him. His lordship pledged his honour that he would not do so. The boy replied, "I dinna ken onything about your honour, but if ye say as sure's deeth, I'll come doun."

Proverbs are sometimes local in their application.

The men o' the Mearns manna do mair than they may. Even the men of Kincardineshire can only do their utmost — a proverb intended to be highly complimentary to the powers of the men of that county.

I'll mak Cathkin's covenant with you, Let abee for let abee. This is a local saying quoted often in Hamilton. The laird of that property had — very unlike the excellent family who have now possessed

[1] Saddle for supporting panniers. [2] Vol. I., page 134.

it for more than a century — been addicted to intemperance. One of his neighbours, in order to frighten him on his way home from his evening potations, disguised himself in a very dark night, and personating the devil, claimed a title to carry him off as his rightful property. Contrary to all expectation, however, the laird showed fight, and was about to commence the onslaught, when a parley was proposed, and the issue was "Cathkin's covenant, Let abee for let abee."

When the castle of Stirling gets a hat, the carse of Corntown pays for that. This is a local proverbial saying; the meaning is, that when the clouds descend so low as to envelope Stirling Castle, a deluge of rain may be expected in the adjacent country.

I will conclude this notice of our proverbial reminiscences, by adding a cluster of Scottish proverbs, selected from an excellent article on the general subject in the "North British Review" of February 1858. The reviewer designates these as "broader in their mirth, and more caustic in their tone," than the moral proverbial expressions of the Spanish and Italian: —

A blate[1] *cat maks a proud mouse.*
Better a toom[2] *house than an ill tenant.*
Jouk[3] *and let the jaw*[4] *gang by.*
Mony ane speirs the gate[5] *he kens fu' weel.*

1 Shy. 2 Empty. 3 Stoop down.
4 Wave. 5 The way.

The tod[1] *ne'er sped better than when he gaed his ain errand.*
A wilfu' man should be unco wise.
He that has a meikle nose thinks ilka ane speaks o't.
He that teaches himsel has a fule for his maister.
It is an ill cause that the lawyer thinks shame o'.
Lippen[2] *to me, but look to yoursell.*
Mair whistle than woo, as the souter said when shearing the soo.
Ye gae far about seeking the nearest.
Ye'll no sell your hen in a rainy day.
Ye'll mend when ye grow better.
Ye're nae chicken for a' your cheepin'.[3]

I have now adduced quite sufficient specimens to convince those who may not have given attention to the subject, how much of wisdom, knowledge of life, and good feeling, are contained in these aphorisms which compose the mass of our Scottish proverbial sayings. No doubt, to many of my younger readers, proverbs are little known, and to all they are becoming more and more matters of reminiscence. I am quite convinced that much of the old quaint and characteristic Scottish talk which we are now endeavouring to recall, depended on a happy use of those abstracts of moral sentiment. And this feeling will be confirmed when we call to mind how often those of the old Scottish school of character, whose conversation we have ourselves admired, had most largely availed themselves of the use of its *proverbial* philosophy.

[1] Fox. [2] Trust to. [3] Chirping.

CHAPTER V.

On Scottish Stories of Wit and Humour.

THE portion of our subject, which we proposed under the head of "Reminiscences of Scottish Stories of Wit or Humour," yet remains to be considered. This is closely connected with the question of Scottish dialect and expressions; indeed, on some points hardly separable, as the wit, to a great extent, proceeds from the quaint and picturesque modes of expressing it. But here we are met by a difficulty. On high authority it has been declared that no such thing as wit exists among us. What has no existence can have no change. We cannot be said to have lost a quality which we never possessed. Many of my readers are no doubt familiar with what Sidney Smith declared on this point, and certainly on the question of wit he must be considered an authority. He used to say (I am almost ashamed to repeat it), "It requires a surgical operation to get a joke well into a Scotch understanding. Their only idea of wit, which prevails occasionally in the north, and which, under the name of Wut, is so infinitely distressing to peo-

ple of good taste, is laughing immoderately at stated intervals." Strange language to use of a country which has produced Smollett, Burns, Scott, Galt, and Wilson, all remarkable for the humour diffused through their writings. Indeed, we may fairly ask, have they equals in this respect amongst English writers? Charles Lamb had the same notion, or, I should rather say, the same prejudice, about Scottish people not being accessible to wit; and he tells a story of what happened to himself in corroboration of the opinion. He had been asked to a party, and one object of the invitation had been to meet a son of Burns. When he arrived, Mr. Burns had not made his appearance, and in the course of conversation regarding the family of the poet, Lamb, in his lack-a-daisical kind of manner, said "I wish it had been the father instead of the son;" upon which four Scotchmen present with one voice exclaimed, "That's impossible, for *he's dead*.[1] Now, there will be dull men and matter-of-fact men everywhere who do not take a joke or enter into a jocular allusion; but surely, as a general remark, this is far from being a natural quality of our country. Sydney Smith and Charles Lamb say so. But at the risk of being considered presumptuous, I will say I think them entirely

[1] After all, the remark may not have been so absurd then as it appears now. Burns had not been long dead, nor was he then so noted a character as he is now. The Scotchmen might really have supposed a Southrener unacquainted with the *fact* of the poet's death.

mistaken. I should say that there was, on the contrary, a strong *connection* between the Scottish temperament, and, call it if you like, humour if it is not wit. And what is the difference? My readers may not be afraid that they are to be led through a labyrinth of metaphysical distinctions between wit and humour. I have read Dr. Campbell's dissertation on the difference in his philosophy of rhetoric, I have read S. Smith's own two lectures, but I confess I am not much the wiser. Professors of rhetoric, no doubt, must have such discussions, but when you wish to be amused by the thing itself, it is somewhat disappointing to be presented with metaphysical analysis. It is like instituting an examination of the glass and cork of a champagne bottle, and a chemical testing of the wine. In the very process the volatile and sparkling draught which was to delight the palate, has become like ditch water, vapid and dead. What I mean is, that, call it wit or humour, or what you please, there is a school of Scottish pleasantry, amusing and characteristic beyond all other. Don't think of *analysing* its nature, or the qualities of which it is composed; enjoy its quaint and amusing flow of oddity and fun; as we may, for instance, suppose it to have flowed on that eventful night so joyously described by Burns: —

> "The souter tauld his queerest stories,
> The landlord's laugh was ready chorus."

Or we may think of the delight it gave the good Mr. Balwhidder, when he tells, in his "Annals of the Par-

ish," of some such story, that it was a "jocosity that was just a kittle to hear." When I speak of changes in such Scottish humour which have taken place, I refer to a particular sort of humour, and I speak of the sort of feelings that belongs to Scottish pleasantry, — which is sly, and cheery, and pawky. It is, undoubtedly, a humour that depends a good deal upon the vehicle in which the story is conveyed. If, as we have said, our quaint dialect is passing away, and our national eccentric points of character, we must expect to find much of the peculiar humour allied with them to have passed away also. In other departments of wit and repartee, and acute hits at men and things, Scotchmen (whatever S. Smith may have said to the contrary) are equal to their neighbours, and, so far as I know, may have gained rather than lost. But this peculiar humour of which I now speak has not, in our day, the scope and development which were permitted to it by the former generation. Where the tendency exists, the exercise of it is kept down by the usages and feelings of society. For examples of it (in its full force at any rate) we must go back to a race who are departed. One remark, however, has occurred to me in regard to the specimens we have of this kind of humour, viz., that they do not always proceed from the wit or the cleverness of any of the individuals concerned in them. The amusement comes from the circumstances, from the concurrence or combination of the ideas, and in many cases from the mere expressions

which describe the facts. The humour of the narrative is unquestionable, and yet no one has tried to be humorous. In short, it is the *Scottishness* that gives the zest. The same ideas differently expounded might have no point at all. There is, for example, something highly original in the notions of celestial mechanics entertained by an honest Scottish Fife lass regarding the theory of comets. Having occasion to go out after dark, and having observed the brilliant comet then visible, (1858,) she ran in with breathless haste to the house, calling on her fellow-servants to "Come oot and see a new star that hasna got its tail cuttit aff yet!" Exquisite astronomical speculation! Stars, like puppies, are born with tails, and in due time have them docked. Take an example of a story where there is no display of any one's wit or humour, and yet it is a good story, and one can't exactly say why: — An English traveller had gone on a fine highland road so long, without having seen an indication of fellow-travellers, that he became astonished at the solitude of the country; and no doubt before the Highlands were so much frequented as they are in our time, the roads had a very striking aspect of solitariness. Our traveller at last coming up to an old man breaking stones, he asked him if there was any traffic on this road — was it at *all* frequented? "Ay," he said, "it's no ill at that; there was a cadge body yestreen, and there's yoursell the day." No English version of the story could have half such amuse

ment, or half so quaint a character. An answer, even still more characteristic, is recorded to have been given by a countryman to a traveller. Being doubtful of his way, he inquired if he were on the right road to Dunkeld. With some of his national inquisitiveness about strangers, the countryman asked his inquirer where he came from. Offended at the liberty, as he considered it, he sharply reminded the man that where he came from was nothing to him; but all the answer he got, was the quiet rejoinder, "Indeed, it's just as little to me whar ye'r gaen'." A friend has told me of an answer highly characteristic of this dry and unconcerned quality which he heard given to a fellow-traveller. A gentleman sitting opposite to him in the stage-coach at Berwick, complained bitterly that the cushion on which he sat was quite wet. On looking up to the roof he saw a hole through which the rain descended copiously, and at once accounted for the mischief. He called for the coachman, and in great wrath reproached him with the evil under which he suffered, and pointed to the hole which was the cause of it. All the satisfaction, however, that he got, was the quiet unmoved reply, "Ay, mony a ane has complained o' *that* hole." Another anecdote I heard from a gentleman who vouched for the truth, which is just a case where the narrative has its humour, not from the wit which is displayed, but from that dry matter-of-fact view of things peculiar to some of our countrymen. The friend of my informant

was walking in a street of Perth, when, to his horror, he saw a workman fall from a roof where he was mending slates, right upon the pavement. By extraordinary good fortune he was not killed, and, on the gentleman going up to his assistance, and exclaiming with much excitement, "God bless me, are you much hurt?" all the answer he got was the cool rejoinder, "On the contrary, sir." A similar matter-of-fact answer was made by one of the old race of Montrose humorists. He was coming out of church, and in the press of the kirk *skailing*, a young man thoughtlessly trod on the old gentleman's toe, which was tender with corns. He hastened to apologise, saying, "I am very sorry, sir; I beg your pardon." The only acknowledgment of which was the dry answer, "And ye've as muckle need, sir."

From a first-rate *Highland* authority I have been supplied with the following clever and crushing reply to what was intended as a sarcastic compliment and a smart saying.

About the beginning of the present century, the then Campbell, of Combie, on Loch Awe side, in Argyleshire, was a man of extraordinary character, and of great physical strength, and such swiftness of foot that it is said he could "catch the best *tup* on the hill." He also looked upon himself as a "pretty man," though in this he was singular; also, it was more than whispered that the laird was not remarkable for his principles of honesty.

There also lived in the same district a Miss

MacNabb of Bar-a'-Chaistril, a lady who, before she had passed the zenith of life, had never been remarkable for her beauty — the contrary even had passed into a proverb, while she was in her teens; but, to counterbalance this defect in external qualities, nature had endowed her with great benevolence, while she was renowned for her probity. One day the Laird of Combie, who piqued himself on his *bon-mots*, was, as frequently happened, a guest of Miss MacNabb's, and after dinner, several toasts had gone round as usual, Combie addressed his hostess, and requested an especial bumper, insisting on all the guests to fill to the brim. He then rose, and said, addressing himself to Miss MacNabb, "I propose the old Scottish toast of 'Honest men and *bonnie* lassies,'" and, bowing to the hostess, he resumed his seat. The lady returned his bow with her usual amiable smile, and, taking up her glass, replied, "Weel, Combie, I am sure *we* may drink that, for it will neither apply to *you* nor *me*."

An amusing example of a quiet cool view of a pecuniary transaction happened to my father whilst doing the business of the rent day. He was receiving sums of money from the tenants in succession. After looking over a bundle of notes which he had just received from one of them, a well-known character, he said in banter, "James, the notes are not correct." To which the farmer, who was much of a humorist, dryly answered, "I dinna ken what they may be *noo*; but they were a' richt afore ye had your fingers in

amang 'em." An English farmer would hardly have spoken thus to his landlord. The Duke of Buccleuch told me an answer very quaintly Scotch, given to his grandmother by a farmer of the old school. A dinner was given to some tenantry of the vast estates of the family, in the time of Duke Henry. His Duchess (the last descendant of the Dukes of Montague) always appeared at table on such occasion, and did the honours with that mixture of dignity and of affable kindness for which she was so remarkable. Abundant hospitality was shewn to all the guests. The Duchess having observed one of the tenants supplied with boiled beef from a noble round, proposed that he should add a supply of cabbage; on his declining, the Duchess good humouredly remarked, "Why, boiled beef and greens seem so naturally to go together, I wonder you don't take it." To which the honest farmer objected, "Ay, but your Grace maun alloo its a vara *windy* vegetable," in delicate allusion to the flatulent quality of the esculent. Similar to this was the native answer of a farmer on the occasion of a rent day. The lady of the house asked him if he would take some *rhubarb* tart, "Mony thanks, mem, I dinna need it."

Amongst the lower orders, humour is found, occasionally, very rich in mere children, and I recollect a remarkable illustration of this early native humour occurring in a family in Forfarshire, where I used, in former days, to be very intimate. A wretched

woman, who used to traverse the country as a beggar or tramp, left a poor, half starved little girl by the road side, near the house of my friends. Always ready to assist the unfortunate, they took charge of the child, and as she grew a little older, they began to give her some education, and taught her to read. She soon made some progress in reading the Bible, and the native odd humour, of which we speak, began soon to shew itself. On reading the passage, which began, "Then David rose," etc., the child stopped, and looked up knowingly, to say, "I ken wha that was," and, on being asked what she could mean, she confidently said, "That's David Rowse the pleuchman." And again reading the passage where the words occur, "He took Paul's girdle," the child said with much confidence, "I ken what he took that for," and on being asked to explain, replied at once, "To bake's bannocks on," "girdle" being, in the north, the name for the iron plate hung over the fire, for making oat cakes or bannocks.

A kind correspondent has sent me, from personal knowledge, an admirable pendant to these stories of Scottish child acuteness and shrewd observation. A young lady friend of his, resident in a part of Ayrshire, rather remote from any very satisfactory administration of the Gospel, is in the habit of collecting the children of the neighbourhood on Sundays at the "big house," for religious instruction. On one occasion, the class had repeated the para-

phrase of the Lord's Prayer, which contains these lines —

> "Give us this day our daily bread,
> And raiment *fit* provide."

There being no question as to what "daily bread" was, the teacher proceeded to ask; "What do you understand by 'raiment fit,' or, as we might say, 'fit raiment?'" For a short time the class remained puzzled at the question; but at last one little girl sung out, "stockings and shune." The child knew that "fit," was Scotch for feet, so her natural explanation of the phrase was equivalent to "feet raiment," or "stockings and shune," as she termed it.

To a distinguished member of the Church of Scotland I am indebted for an excellent story of quaint child humour, which he had from the lips of an old woman who related the story of herself — When a girl of eight years of age, she was taken by her grandmother to church. The parish minister was not only a long preacher, but, as the custom was, delivered two sermons on the Sabbath day without any interval, and thus saved the parishioners the two journeys to church. Elizabeth was sufficiently wearied before the close of the first discourse, but when, after singing and prayer, the good minister opened the Bible, read a second text, and prepared to give a second sermon, the young girl, being both tired and hungry, lost all patience, and cried out to her grandmother, to the no small amusement of those who were so near as to hear her, "Come awa, gran-

ny, and gang hame; this is a lang grace and nae meat."

A most amusing account of child humour used to be narrated by an old Mr. Campbell of Jura, who told the story of his own son. It seems the boy was much spoilt by indulgence. In fact, the parents were scarce able to refuse him any thing he demanded. He was in the drawing-room on one occasion when dinner was announced, and on being ordered up to the nursery he insisted on going down to dinner with the company. His mother was for refusal, but the child persevered, and kept saying, "If I dinna gang, I'll tell thon." His father then, for peace sake, let him go. So he went and sat at table by his mother. When he found every one getting soup and himself omitted, he demanded soup, and repeated, "If I dinna get it, I'll tell thon." Well, soup was given, and various other things yielded to his importunities, to which he always added the usual threat of "telling thon." At last, when it came to wine, his mother stood firm, and positively refused, as "a bad thing for little boys," and so on. He then became more vociferous than ever about "telling thon;" and as still he was refused, he declared, "now I will tell thon," and at last roared out, "*Ma new breeks were made oot o' the auld curtains!*"

A facetious and acute friend who rather leans to the S. Smith view of Scottish wit, declares that all our humorous stories are about lairds, and about

lairds who are drunk. Of such stories there are certainly not a few. One of the best belonging to my part of the country, and to many persons I should perhaps apologise for introducing it at all. The story has been told of various parties and localities, but no doubt the genuine laird was a laird of Balnamoon, (pronounced in the country Bonnymoon,) and that the locality was a wild tract of land, not far from his place, called Munrimmon Moor. Balnamoon had been dining out in the neighbourhood, where by mistake, they had put down to him after dinner cherry brandy, instead of port wine, his usual beverage. The rich flavour and strength so pleased him, that having tasted it, he would have nothing else. On rising from table, therefore, the laird would be more affected by his drink than if he had taken his ordinary allowance of port. His servant Harry, or Hairy,[1] was to drive him home in a gig or whisky, as it was called, the usual open carriage of the time. On crossing the moor, however, whether from greater exposure to the blast, or from the laird's unsteadiness of head, his hat and wig came off and fell upon the ground. Harry got out to pick them up and restore them to his master. The laird was satisfied with the hat, but demurred at the wig. "It's no my wig, Hairy,

[1] In corroboration of the genuineness and authenticity of the story, I am assured by a correspondent that he knows the name of the servant was *not* Hairy; but I have mislaid the reference.

lad; it's no my wig," and refused to have anything to do with it. Hairy lost his patience, and anxious to get home, remonstrated with his master, "Ye'd better tak it, sir, for there's nae waile o' wigs on Munrimmon Moor." The humour of the argument is exquisite, putting to the laird in his unreasonable objection, the sly insinuation that in such a locality, if he did not take *this* wig, he was not likely to find another. Then, what a rich expression, "waile o' wigs." In English what is it? "A choice of perukes," which is nothing comparable to the "waile o' wigs." I ought to mention also an amusing sequel to the story, viz., in what happened after the affair of the wig had been settled, and the laird had consented to return home. When the whisky drove up to the door, Hairy, sitting in front, told the servant who came to "tak out the laird." No laird was to be seen; and it appeared that he had fallen out on the moor without Hairy observing it. Of course they went back, and, picking him up, brought him safe home. A neighbouring laird haying called a few days after, and having referred to the accident, Balnamoon quietly added, "Indeed, I maun hae a lume[1] that'll *had in*."

The laird of Balnamoon was a truly eccentric character. He joined with his drinking propensities a great zeal for the Episcopal Church, the service of which he read to his own family with much solemnity and earnestness of manner. Two gentlemen,

[1] A vessel.

one of them a stranger to the country, having called pretty early one Sunday morning, Balnamoon invited them to dinner, and as they accepted the invitation, they remained and joined in the forenoon devotional exercises conducted by Balnamoon himself. The stranger was much impressed with the laird's performance of the service, and during a walk which they took before dinner mentioned to his friend how highly he esteemed the religious deportment of their host. The gentleman said nothing, but smiled to himself at the scene which he anticipated was to follow. After dinner Balnamoon set himself, according to the custom of old hospitable Scottish hosts, to make his guests as drunk as possible. The result was, that the party spent the evening in a riotous debauch, and were carried to bed by the servants at a late hour. Next day, when they had taken leave and left the house, the gentleman who had introduced his friend asked him what he thought of their entertainer — "Why, really," he replied, with evident astonishment, "sic a speat o' praying, and sic a speat o' drinking, I never knew in the whole course of my life."

The late Lady Dalhousie, mother, I mean, of the present distinguished Peer, used to tell a characteristic anecdote of her day. But here, on mention of the name Christian, Countess of Dalhousie, may I pause a moment to recall the memory of one who was a very remarkable person. She was, for many years, to me and mine, a sincere and true and valuable

friend. By an awful dispensation of God's providence, she died *instantaneously* under my roof in 1839. Lady Dalhousie was eminently distinguished for a fund of the most varied knowledge, for a clear and powerful judgment, for acute observation, a kind heart, a brilliant wit. The story was thus :—A Scottish judge, somewhat in the predicament of the Laird of Balnamoon, had dined at Coalstoun with her father Charles Brown, an advocate, and son of George Brown, who sat in the Supreme Court as a judge with the title of Lord Coalstoun. The party had been convivial, as we know parties of the highest legal characters often were in those days. When breaking up, and going to the drawing-room, one of them, not seeing his way very clearly, stepped out of the dining-room window, which was open to the summer air. The ground at Coalstoun sloping off from the house behind, the worthy judge got a great fall, and rolled down the bank. He contrived, however, as tipsy men generally do, to regain his legs, and was able to reach the drawing-room. The first remark he made was an innocent remonstrance with his friend the host, "Od, Charlie Brown, what gars ye hae sic lang steps to your *front* door."

On Deeside, where many original stories had their origin, I recollect hearing several of an excellent and worthy, but very simple-minded man, the Laird of Craigmyle. On one occasion, when the beautiful and clever Jane, Duchess of Gordon, was scouring through the country, intent upon some of those elec-

tioneering schemes which often occupied her fertile imagination and active energies, she came to call at Craigmyle, and having heard that the laird was making bricks on the property, for the purpose of building a garden wall, with her usual tact she opened the subject, and kindly asked, "Well Mr. Gordon, and how do your bricks come on?" Good Craigmyle's thoughts were much occupied with a new leather part of his dress, which he had had lately constructed, so, looking down on his nether garments, he said in pure Aberdeen dialect, "Muckle obleeged to yer Grace, the breeks war sum ticht at first, but they are deeing weel eneuch noo." The last laird of Macnab, before the clan finally broke up and emigrated to Canada, was a well-known character in the country, and being poor, used to ride about on a most wretched horse, which gave occasion to many jibes at his expense. The laird was in the constant habit of riding up from the country to attend the Musselburgh races. A young wit, by way of playing him off on the race course, asked him in a contemptuous tone, "Is that the same horse you had last year, Laird?" "Na," said the laird, brandishing his whip in the interrogator's face in so emphatic a manner as to preclude further questioning, "Na; but it's the same *whup*." In those days, as might be expected, people were not nice in expressions of their dislike to persons or measures. If there be not more charity in society, there is certainly more courtesy. I have, from a friend, an

anecdote illustrative of this remark, in regard to feelings exercised towards an unpopular laird. In the neighbourhood of Bamff, in Forfarshire, the seat of a very ancient family of the Ramsays, lived a proprietor who bore the appellation of Corb, from the name of his estate. The family has passed away and its property merged in Bamff. This laird was intensely disliked in the neighbourhood. Sir George Ramsay was, on the other hand, universally popular and respected. On one occasion, Sir George, in passing a morass in his own neighbourhood, had missed the road and fallen into a bog to an alarming depth. To his great relief, he saw a passenger coming along the path, which was at no great distance. He called loudly for his help, but the man took no notice. Poor Sir George felt himself sinking, and redoubled his cries for assistance; all at once the passenger rushed forward, carefully extricated him from his perilous position, and politely apologised for his first neglect of his appeal, adding, as his reason, "Indeed, Sir George, I thought it was Corb!" evidently meaning that *had* it been Corb, he must have taken his chance for him.

In Lanarkshire, there lived a sma sma laird named Hamilton, who was noted for his eccentricity. On one occasion, a neighbour waited on him, and requested his name as an accommodation to a bit bill for twenty pounds at three months' date, which led to the following characteristic and truly Scottish colloquy:—"Na, na, I canna do that." "What for

no, laird, ye hae dune the same thing for ithers." "Aye, aye, Tammas, but there's wheels within wheels ye ken naething about; I canna do't." "It's a sma affair to refuse me, laird." "Weel, ye see, Tammas, if I was to pit my name till't, ye wad get the siller frae the bank, and when the time came round, ye wadna be ready, and I wad hae to pay't; sae then you and me wad quarrel, sae we mae just as weel quarrel the noo, as lang's the siller's in ma pouch." On one occasion, Hamilton having business with the late Duke of Hamilton at Hamilton Palace, the Duke politely asked him to lunch. A liveried servant waited upon them, and was most assiduous in his attentions to the Duke and his guest. At last our eccentric friend lost patience, and looking at the servant, addressed him thus, "What the deil for are ye dance, dancing, about the room that gait; can ye no draw in your chair and sit down, I'm sure there's *plenty on the table for three.*"

Of another laird whom I heard often spoken of in old times, an anecdote was told strongly Scotch. Our friend had much difficulty (as many worthy lairds have had) in meeting the claims of those two woful periods of the year called with us in Scotland the "tarmes." He had been employing for some time as workman a stranger from the south on some house repairs, of the not uncommon name in England of Christmas. His servant early one morning called out at the laird's door in great excitement that

"Christmas had run away, and nobody knew where he had gone." He turned in his bed with the earnest ejaculation, "I only wish he had taken Whitsunday and Martinmas along with him." I do not know a better illustration of quiet, shrewd, and acute Scottish humour than the following little story, which an esteemed correspondent mentions having heard from his father when a boy, relating to a former Duke of Athole, who had *no family of his own*, and whom he mentions as having remembered very well:—He met, one morning, one of his cottars or gardeners, whose wife he knew to be in the *hopeful way*, and, asking him "How Marget was the day," the man replied, that she had that morning given him twins. Upon which the Duke said,—"Weel, Donald, ye ken the Almighty never sends bairns without the meat." "That may be, your Grace," said Donald; "but whiles I think that Providence maks a mistak in thae matters, and sends the bairns to ae hoose and the meat to anither!" The Duke took the hint, and sent him a cow with calf the following morning.

I have heard of an amusing scene between a laird celebrated for his saving propensities, and a wandering sort of Edie Ochiltree, a well-known itinerant, who lived by his wits and what he could pick up in his rounds amongst the houses of lairds and farmers. One thrifty laird having seen him sit down near his own gate to examine the contents of his poke or wallet, conjectured that he had come from the house, and so he drew near to see what he had carried off.

As he was keenly investigating the mendicant's spoils, his quick eye detected some bones on which there remained more meat than should have been allowed to leave his kitchen. Accordingly he pounced upon the bones, and declared he had been robbed, and insisted on his returning to the house and giving back the spoil. The beggar was, however, prepared for the attack, and sturdily defending his property, boldly asserting, "Na, na, laird, thae are no Todbrae banes; thae are Inch-Byre banes, and nane o' your honour's," — meaning that he had received these bones at the house of a neighbour of a more liberal character. But the beggar's professional discrimination between the bones of the two mansions, and his pertinacious defence of his own property, would have been most amusing to a bystander.

I have, however, a reverse story, in which the beggar is quietly silenced by the proprietor. A noble lord, some generations back, well known for his frugal habits, had just picked up a small copper coin in his own avenue, and had been observed by one of the itinerating mendicant race, who grudged the transfer of the piece into the peer's pocket, exclaimed, "O, gie't to me, my lord;" to which the quiet answer was, "Na, na; fin' a fardin for yersell, puir body."

There are always pointed anecdotes against houses wanting in a liberal and hospitable expenditure in Scotland. Thus, we have heard of a master leaving such a mansion, and taxing his servant with being

drunk, which he had too often been after country visits. On this occasion, however, he was innocent of the charge, for he had not had the *opportunity* to transgress. So, when his master asserted, "Jemmy, you are drunk!" Jemmy very quietly answered, "Indeed, sir, I wish I wur." At another mansion, notorious for scanty fare, a gentleman was inquiring of the gardener about a dog which some time ago he had given to the laird. The gardener shewed him a lank greyhound, on which the gentleman said, — "No, no; the dog I gave your master was a mastiff, not a greyhound;" to which the gardener quietly answered, "Indeed, ony dog micht sune become a greyhound by stopping here."

From a friend and near relative, a minister of the Established Church of Scotland, I used to hear many characteristic stories. He had a curious vein of this sort of humour in himself, besides what he brought out of others. One of his peculiarities was a mortal antipathy to the whole French nation, whom he frequently abused in no measured terms. At the same time he had great relish of a glass of claret, which he considered the prince of all social beverages. So he usually finished off his anti-gallican tirades with the reservation, "But the bodies brew the braw drink." He lived amongst his own people, and knew well the habits and peculiarities of a race gone by. He had many stories connected with the pastoral relation between minister and people, and all such stories are curious, not merely for their amuse-

ment, but from the illustration they afford us of that peculiar Scottish humour which we are now describing. He had himself, when a very young boy, before he came up to the Edinburgh High School, been at the parochial school where he resided, and which, like many others at that period, had a considerable reputation for the skill and scholarship of the master. He used to describe school scenes rather different, I suspect, from school scenes in our day. One boy, on coming late, exclaimed that the cause had been a regular pitched battle between his parents, with the details of which he amused his school-fellows, and he described the battle in vivid and Scottish Homeric terms, "And eh, as they faucht and they faucht," adding, however, with much complacency, "but my minnie dang, she did tho'."

There was a style of conversation and quaint modes of communication between ministers and their people at that time, which, I suppose, would seem strange to the present generation; as, for example, I recollect a conversation between this relative and one of his parishioners of this description. It had been a very wet and unpromising autumn. The minister met a certain Janet of his flock, and accosted her very kindly. He remarked, "Bad prospect for the har'st (harvest), Janet, this wet." Janet — "Indeed, sir, I've seen as muckle as that there'll be nae har'st the year." Minister — "Na, Janet, deil as muckle as that't ever ye saw."

As I have said, he was a clergyman of the Established Church, and had many stories about ministers and people, arising out of his own pastoral experience, or the experience of friends and neighbours. He was much delighted with the not very refined rebuke which one of his own farmers had given to a young minister who had for some Sundays occupied his pulpit. The young man dined with the farmer in the afternoon when services were over, and his appetite was so sharp, that he thought it necessary to apologise to his host for eating so substantial a dinner — "You see," he said, "I am always very hungry after preaching." The old gentleman, not much admiring the youth's pulpit ministrations, having heard this apology two or three times, at last replied sarcastically, "Indeed, sir, I'm no surprised at it, considering the trash that comes aff your stamach in the morning." There was a story for which he had names of place and persons, but I forget whether it was of his own experience. I think it was his own; at any rate it was thus: — A lad had come for examination, previous to his receiving his first communion. The pastor, knowing that his young friend was not very profound in his theology, and not wishing to discourage him, or keep him from the table unless compelled to do so, began by asking what he thought a safe question, and what would give him confidence. So he took the old Testament, and asked him, in reference to the Mosaic law, how many commandments there

were. After a little thought he put his answer in the modest form of a supposition, and replied, cautiously, "Aiblins[1] a hunner." The clergyman was vexed, and told him such ignorance was intolerable, that he could not proceed in examination, and that the youth must wait and learn more; so he went away. On returning home he met a friend on his way to the manse, and, on learning that he, too, was going to the minister for examination, shrewdly asked him, "Weel, what will ye say noo if the minister speers hoo mony commandments there are?" "Say! why, I shall say ten to be sure." To which the other rejoined, with great triumph, "Ten! Try ye him wi' ten! I tried him wi' a hunner, and he wasna satisfeed."

I have received from Miss Stirling Graham of Duntrune a kind contribution to the present volume. I have deemed it best to put her communications together, and I introduce them here. They contain an account of an extraordinary Scottish superstition, and of an equally extraordinary mode of acting under its influence. They describe two remarkable Scottish characters, and contain some Forfarshire traditional sayings. Those who have read a volume lately printed for circulation amongst her friends, containing an account of some of those "Mystifications" with which she charmed the Edinburgh society of her early days, will know how exquisite is Miss Stirling Graham's appreciation of Scottish

[1] Perhaps.

humour, and how complete her knowledge of Scottish character.

There lived here in Gayfield Square two charming old maiden ladies — Mrs. Mary Smith and Miss Peggy Fyffe. They had a pet superstition, for which they paid, between them, threepence a week to a street porter, that he might be the first to tell them it was Monday, deeming it unlucky to hear the day first mentioned by a woman. They laid each three-halfpence on the hall table on Sunday night, and early next morning the man called to wish them a happy Monday, and pick up his reward. Once when Miss Fyffe was confined to bed, her attendant inquired what she would like for dinner, for it was *Monday*, and there would be no fish to be got. "Wae worth you," Miss Fyffe exclaimed, "do ye no ken that I pay a man to tell me it's Monday?" When Miss Fyffe died, Mrs. Smith refused to pay any more than her weekly dole of three-halfpence. Miss Douglass of Brigton being present, the maid whispered, "Never mind, I'll just pay it out of the house-money!" When Miss Douglass returned home, she related this strange superstition to a party of friends, who enjoyed it as a joke; but her sister, Mrs. Hunter, looked rather serious, saying, "Well, I am not the least superstitious, but I do not like to be told by a woman it is Monday!"

Mrs. Graham of Balmure had a faithful old servant called Saunders Hay, who had a ready word on every subject. Hearing Miss Graham appeal to her

sister, if she did not think her gown rather too long, might it not be as well to have it shortened? "Na, na," quoth Saunders; "it's very well; clip nor pare ony mare at it." One Sunday evening Saunders and his wife had a serious quarrel. Jean said she thought David (King David) hadna taen much pains when he *metred* the Psalms; on which Saunders flew in a passion at her ignorance, and reminded her that it was George Buchanan who metred the Psalms.

Mr. Taylor, well known in London as having the management of the opera-house, had his father up from Aberdeen to visit him, and see the wonders of the city. When the old man returned home, his friends, anxious to know the impressions produced on his mind by scenes and characters so different from what he had been accustomed to at home, inquired what sort of business his son carried on? "Ou," said he (in reference to the operatic singers and the corps de ballet), "He just keeps a curn[1] o' quainies[2] and a wheen widdyfous,[3] and gars them fissle,[4] and loup, and mak murgeons[5] to please the great fowk."

An Aberdonian of the name of Bannerman (possibly a cousin of mine own), of a matter-of-fact disposition, when some one remarked, "It's a fine day," dryly responded, "Fa's findin' faut wi' the day?—ye wad pick a quarrel wi' a steen wa'."

Another Aberdonian, describing the dress of a

[1] A number. [2] Young girls. [3] Gallows birds.
[4] Make whistling noises. [5] Distorted gestures

lady whom he had seen at a ball the night before, said, "She had a tappie-towrie on her head, and a diamond necklace on her neck; and she had stockings and shoon, for I saw *them*, but for onything mair I dinna ken."

Mrs. Matthew, who farmed Westhall some twenty years ago, was an original homely person. Her maiden name was Anderson, the descendant of a race of sensible well-to-do-people. On inquiring if she was connected with the provost of Dundee, she replied, with a look of great contempt, "Na, na, his father cam out o' Forgan. He was wont to ca' my father the *man Anderson*, but, my certie, he wasna fit to be linings to the man Anderson. Our land is very dear, and so greedy for muck, deil burst it; and my grieve is a souple, double, seceder rascal." As a set off to this account, a farmer, close to Edinburgh, observed to Mr. R. Chambers, "The land oot here is noo quite tired o' police dung."

A farmer in Strathmore being invited to dine at Belmont, had the precaution to ask the butler if there was any particular ceremony to be observed at table, and was told there was only one thing his lord and lady disliked, and that was the drinking of healths. The good man determined to be on his good behaviour; so, when raising the wine to his lips, he called out, "Here's to a' the company's gude health, except my Lord Privy Seal and Lady Betty Mackenzie."

Mr. Miller of Ballumbie had occasion to find fault

with one of his labourers who had been improvident, and known better days. He was digging a drain, and he told him if he did not make better work he should turn him off. The man was very angry, and throwing down his spade, called out in a tone of resentment, "Ye are ower pridefu', Davie Miller; since I mind ye i' the warld when ye had neither cow nor ewe." "Very well," replied Mr. Miller mildly, "I remember you when you had both."

A neighbour called one day upon Lord Dunsinnan when he was spending his law-holidays on his estate in Strathmore. The dinner consisted of broth and two boiled fowls. Just as they were sitting down to table another neighbour walked in, and another boiled fowl was placed before him; and after some excellent claret, and pleasant discourse, the visitors mounted their horses to ride home, pondering by the way, over the singularity of the dinner, and wondering what the servants got; they had the curiosity to ask them, to which they replied, "Ilka ane had a hen boiled in broth."

The late Lord Airlie remarking to one of his tenants that it was a very wet season, "Indeed, my lord," replied the man, "I think the spiggot's oot a'thegither."

A countryman, from the Braes of Angus, came to tell the minister that his wife was brought to bed, and they wished him to christen the bairn. The minister, very pompous, inquired whether the child was male or female? "It's neither, sir," was the

answer. "Then, in the name of goodness," said the reverend man, "what is it?" "Ou, it's juist a bit queanie!"

An old beggar woman was a frequent visitor at Duntrune. She was called Bobbins, a nickname which she did not particularly like, as it had reference to some intromissions with her neighbours' yarn. She was seized with a cold, and confined to bed. The neighbours sent donations of various delicacies, one of them a jar of black-currant jam, which she emptied into a wooden dish, and ate it all up with a large horn spoon, making wry faces all the time, and took credit to herself for the same, by remarking, "That mony ane wadna sup it, for the leddy maks her jeil wi' the caff (chaff) amang't." Then she drank six bottles of beer and half a bottle of whisky, and fell asleep for eight-and-forty hours, at the end of which time she awoke quite recovered!

An old cadger, the personification of contentment, used to sit sound asleep on his cart, trusting himself and his fish to the discretion of the horse. One day he arrived at Duntrune nearly frozen to death, and was carried into the kitchen to be thawed. In due time he got something to eat, and a glass of warm toddy to drink, which so cheered his heart, that he exclaimed, "Oh! sirs, I am happy wi' ye. I am just ae eild wi' the auld king (George III.), and I daur say I'm as happy a man as he is. The leddy will be takin' a glass to hersell when she comes

in frae her walk, for I am sure naebody could hae it in the hoose and no tak it."

The two following cases furnish specimens of the old Scottish domestics : — There was a waggish old man cook at Duntrune for sixty years, and during three generations of its owners. In 1745-6, when his master was skulking, John found it necessary to take another service, and hired himself to Mr. Wedderburn of Pearsie ; but he wearied to get back to Duntrune. One day the Laird of Pearsie observed him putting a spit through a peat — it may have been for the purpose of cleaning it — be that as it may, the laird inquired the reason for so doing, and John replied, " Indeed, sir, I am just gaein to roast a peat, for fear I forget my trade." At the end of two years he returned to Duntrune, where he continued to exercise his calling till near the close of life.

One day he sent up a roast goose for dinner which he or some one had despoiled of a leg before it came to table ; on which his master summoned him from the kitchen to inquire who had taken the leg off the goose. John replied that all the geese here had but ae leg. In corroboration of his assertion, he pointed to a whole flock before the window, who were, happily, sitting asleep on one leg, with a sentinel on the watch. The laird clapped his hands and cried *whew*, on which they got upon both legs, and flew off. But John, no way discomfited, told his master, if he had cried whew to

the one on the table, it would most likely have done the same. It is not to be believed that John had ever read Boccaccio, or that he ever heard of the Venetian cook, Chichibio, who played the same trick with the crane's leg; but it is possible that two artists in the same vocation, even with four centuries rolling between them, may have originated similar ideas — therefore we may safely give John Fraser credit for his invention. He died in Dundee, where his master paid the last tribute of respect to his memory, and laid his head in the grave beside the family he had served so faithfully.

When the funeral moved from his house, the widow, in the exuberance of gratification, called aloud to her neighbours to come and see the "beautiful burial."

There lived in Arbroath a very remarkable old woman named Meg Matthew, a generous, noble, and disinterested character, and her conduct to the friendless and the orphans should be recorded. She had been a servant to Mr. Cruickshank, the minister of Kinnel. The minister and his wife both died during her service, and left three children totally unprovided. Upon which Meg engaged an attic room in the Market-gate of Arbroath, and carried the two boys and the little girl with her, where she span to maintain them, and she begged from those whom she thought could afford it, their schooling and clothing. She did not ask like a mendicant, but said she must have such and such things for her

bairns ; and when the boys were to be fitted out, she would call at various places, and tell the lady of the house that she must have linen, and that the young ladies must set to work, and make so many shirts for Jamie or Willy.

Situations were procured for the boys ; one went to the West Indies, the other to Montreal, where he married and had a family, whom he left in good circumstances.

In the course of years, the other returned with a competency, and died in Arbroath.

Meg herself accompanied the boys to London to witness their departure, and she saw the king (George III.), whom she described as being "juist like ony ither husbandman wi' a stand o' blue claes."

Betsy Cruickshank obtained a lady's-maid's place in Hopetoun House, where she remained till her marriage with Mr. Haldane, a stocking manufacturer in Haddington. He left her a widow in comfort, and she was much respected, and died in a good old age. Meg was the theme of many conversations between the young ladies of Hopetoun and their attendant. Her name and fame were even well known among the servants.

One day a housemaid ran into the room calling out, "Miss Cruickshank, if your Meg be in the body, she is now coming up the road."

It was Meg herself, arrived on foot from Arbroath ; and rapturously she was welcomed by the whole family. She would remain only a short time,

declining all favours for herself; and when they offered to shew her through the house, she replied, "Na, na, I'm no gaen to big the marrow of it."[1]

She returned home to her spinning-wheel in her solitary little room, and from her homely wrinkled face and rather unsocial manner, she was looked upon by coarse-minded people in the light of a witch, or one that was in compact with the devil. Her dress was a short gown over a woollen petticoat, a striped wincey apron, and a *close white mutch* with a black hood over it. She span a coarse yarn from the waist with both hands. I remember her in her last illness, her death, and seeing her laid in her coffin; and now, looking through the long vista of the present century, and far down into the past, I venerate the singularly beautiful character of that dear old woman, and noble Scottish heart.

Her dust lies within the cemetery of the old abbey of Arbroath, —

> "Embalmed in memory with things that are holy,
> By the spirit that is undying."

About this time Arbroath embraced a very primitive society.

The players visited it once a year for a few weeks, and acted in the hay-loft of the inn.

A very good set they were; stars sometimes from the metropolis, with grand names, such as Willoughby and Mandeville.

[1] To build the equal of it.

Old ladies would take their knitting, and one more eccentric than the others, would carry her muslin caps wet with starch, to prepare them for being ironed, or as she said, "to make them ready to be *goosed;*" and she clapped them between the palms of her hands when cheering the performers.

An Episcopal clergyman married the widow of a blind gentleman, who fitted herself out with such a trousseau as made people *wonder*, for she said, "I was married to a moudiewart last, but now I am getting a husband who can *see* me."

Some people not very scrupulous, put bad coppers into the plate at the chapel door on Sundays, with which the good lady paid her losses at cards during the week, and so, in the end, it came to be known through whose veins the *ill bawbees* circulated.

At one of her parties she remarked that she had never been able to procure any good gin since the Dutch took Flushing. "Wifie, wifie," interposed the minister, "Flushing is in Holland." "Weel," she replied, "I'm sure I dinna care whether it be in France or Ireland!!!"

We find in the conversation of old people frequent mention of parochial functionaries, now either become commonplace, like the rest of the world, or removed altogether, and shut up in poor-houses or mad-houses — I mean parish idiots — eccentric, or somewhat crazy, useless, idle creatures, who used to

wander from house to house, and sometimes made very shrewd, sarcastic remarks upon what was going on in the parish. They used to take great liberty of speech regarding the conduct and disposition of those with whom they came in contact; and many odd sayings which emanated from the parish idiots, were traditionary in country localities. I have a kindly feeling towards these imperfectly intelligent, but often perfectly cunning beings; partly I believe from recollections of early associations in boyish days, with some of those Davy Gellatleys. I have therefore preserved several anecdotes with which I have been favoured, where their odd sayings and indications of a degree of mental activity have been recorded. Parish idiots seem to have had a partiality for getting near the pulpit in church, and their presence there was accordingly sometimes annoying to the preacher and the congregation; as at Maybole, when Dr. Paul, now of St. Cuthbert's, was minister in 1823, the idiot John McLymont had been in the habit of standing so close to the pulpit door as to overlook the Bible and pulpit board. When required, however, by the clergyman, to keep at a greater distance, and not *look in upon the minister*, he got intensely angry and violent. He threatened the minister, "Sir, bæeby (maybe) I'll come further;" meaning to intimate that perhaps he would, if much provoked, come into the pulpit altogether. This, indeed, actually took place on another occasion, and the tenure of the ministerial position was justified by

an argument of a most amusing nature. The circumstance, I am assured, happened in a parish of the north. The clergyman, on coming into church, found the pulpit occupied by the parish idiot. The authorities had been unable to remove him without more violence than was seemly, and therefore waited for the minister to dispossess Tam of the place he had assumed. "Come down, sir, immediately," was the peremptory and indignant call; and on Tam being unmoved, it was repeated with still greater energy. Tam, however, replied, looking down confidentially from his elevation, "Na, na, minister! juist ye come up wi' me. This is a perverse generation, and faith they need us baith." It is curious to mark the sort of glimmering of sense, and even of discriminating thought displayed by persons of this class; as an example, take a conversation held by this same idiot, John McLymont, with Dr. Paul, whom he met some time after. He seemed to have recovered his good humour, as he stopped him, and said, "Sir, I would like to speer a question at ye on a subject that's troubling me." "Well, Johnie, what is the question?" To which he replied, "Sir, is it lawful at ony time to tell a lee?" The minister desired to know what Johnie himself thought upon the point. "Weel, sir," said he, "I'll no say but in every case it's wrang to tell a lee; but," added he, looking archly and giving a knowing wink, "I think there are *waur lees than ithers*." "How, Johnie?" and then he instantly replied with all the

simplicity of a fool, "to *keep down a din for instance.* I'll no say but a man does wrang in telling a lee to keep down a din, but I'm sure he does not do half sae muckle wrang as a man who tells a lee to kick up a deevilment o' a din." This opened a question not likely to occur to such a mind. Mr. Asher, minister of Inveraven in Morayshire, narrated to Dr. Paul a curious example of want of intelligence combined with a power of cunning to redress a fancied wrong, shewn by a poor natural of the parish, who had been seized with a violent inflammatory attack, and was in great danger. The medical attendant saw it necessary to bleed him, but he resisted, and would not submit to it. At last the case became so hopeless that they were obliged to use force, and, holding his hands and feet, the doctor opened a vein and drew blood, upon which the poor creature, struggling violently, bawled out, "O doctor, doctor! you'll kill me! you'll kill me! and depend upon it, the first thing I'll do when I get to the other world will be to *report you to the Board of Supervision there, and get you dismissed.*" A most extraordinary sensation was once produced on a congregation by Rab Hamilton, a well-remembered idiot of the west country, on the occasion of his attendance at the parish kirk of "Auld Ayr, wham ne'er a toun surpasses." Miss Kirkwood, Bothwell, relates the story from the recollection of her aunt, who was present. Rab had put his head between some iron rails, the first intimation of which to the congregation was a stentorian voice

crying out, "Murder! my head 'll hae to be cutit aff! Holy minister! congregation! O my head maun be cutit aff. It's a judgment for leaving my godlie Mr. Peebles at the Newton." After he had been extricated and quieted, when asked, why he put his head there? he said, "It was jeest to look on[1] wi' *anither woman*."

The pathetic complaint of one of this class, residing at a farm-house, has often been narrated, and forms a good illustration of idiot life and feelings. He was living in the greatest comfort, and every want provided. But, like the rest of mankind, he had his own trials, and his own cause for anxiety and annoyance. In this poor fellow's case it was the *great turkey-cock* at the farm, of whom he stood so terribly in awe, that he was afraid to come within a great distance of his enemy. Some of his friends coming to visit him, reminded him how comfortable he was, and how grateful he ought to be for the great care taken of him; he admitted the truth of the remark generally, but still, like the rest of the world, he had to lament over an evil which sadly beset his path in life. There was a secret grievance which embittered his lot; and to his friend he thus opened his heart:—"Ae, ae, but oh, I'm sare hadden doun wi' the bubbly jock."[2]

I have received two anecdotes illustrative both of the occasional acuteness of mind, and of the

[1] Read from the same book.

[2] Sorely kept under by the turkey-cock.

sensitiveness of feeling occasionally indicated by persons thus situated. A well-known idiot, Jamie Fraser, belonging to the parish of Lunan, in Forfarshire, quite surprised people sometimes by his replies. The congregation of his parish church had for some time distressed the minister by their habit of sleeping in church. He had often endeavoured to impress them with a sense of the impropriety of such conduct, and one day when Jamie was sitting in the front gallery wide awake, when many were slumbering round him, the clergyman endeavoured to awaken the attention of his hearers by stating the fact, saying, "You see even Jamie Fraser, the idiot, does not fall asleep, as so many of you are doing." Jamie not liking, perhaps, to be thus designated, coolly replied, "An' I hadna been an idiot, I wad ha' been sleeping too." Another of these imbeciles, belonging to Peebles, had been sitting at church for some time listening attentively to a strong representation from the pulpit of the guilt of deceit and falsehood in Christian characters. He was observed to turn red, and grow very uneasy, until at last, as if wincing under the supposed attack upon himself personally, he roared out, "Indeed, minister, there's mair leears in Peebles than me." As examples of idiots possessing much of the dry humour of their more sane countrymen, and of their facility to utter sly and ready-witted sayings, I have received the two following from Mr. W. Chambers: — Daft Jock Gray, the supposed original of Davie Gel-

latley, was one day assailed by the minister of a south-country parish on the subject of his idleness. "John," said the minister rather pompously, "you are a very idle fellow; you might surely herd a few cows." "Me hird!" replied Jock, "I dinna ken corn frae gerse."

In the memorials of the "Montgomeries, Earls of Eglinton," vol. i. p. 134, occurs an anecdote of an idiot illustrative of the peculiar acuteness and quaint humour which occasionally mark the sayings of the class. There was a certain "Daft Will Speir," who was a privileged haunter of Eglinton Castle and grounds. He was discovered by the Earl one day taking a near cut, and crossing a fence in the demesne. The Earl called out, "Come back, sir, that's not the road." "Do ye ken," said Will, "whaur I'm gaun?" "No," replied his lordship. "Weel, hoo the deil do ye ken whether this be the road or no?"

In Peebles there was a crazy being of this kind called "Daft Yedie." On one occasion he saw a gentleman, a stranger in the town, who had a club foot. Yedie contemplated this phenomenon with some interest, and addressing the gentleman, said compassionately, "It's a great pity — it spoils the boot." There is a story of one of those half-witted creatures of a different character from the humorous ones already recorded; I think it is exceedingly affecting, and with it I will conclude my collection. The story is traditionary in a country district, and I

am not aware of its being ever printed. A poor boy, of this class, who had evidently manifested a tendency towards religious and devotional feelings, asked permission from the clergyman to attend the Lord's Table and partake of the holy communion with the other members of the congregation (whether Episcopalian or Presbyterian I do not know). The clergyman demurred for some time, under the impression of his mind being incapable of a right and due understanding of the sacred ordinance. But observing the extreme earnestness of the poor boy, at last gave consent, and he was allowed to come. He was much affected, and all the way home was heard to exclaim, "Oh! I hae seen the pretty man." This referred to his seeing the Lord Jesus, whom he had approached in the sacrament. He kept repeating the words, and went with them on his lips to rest for the night. Not appearing at the usual hour for breakfast, when they went to his bedside they found him dead! The excitement had been too much — mind and body had given way — and the half-idiot of earth awoke to the glories and the bliss of his Redeemer's presence.

The relative whom I have mentioned had many stories of a parochial fraternity of a more authorized character than the parish idiots, but whose eccentricities also have, in a great measure, given way before the assimilating spirit of the times. I mean the old Scottish beadle, or betheral, as he used to be called. Some classes of men are found

to have that nameless but distinguishing characteristic of figure and aspect which marks out particular occupations and professions of mankind. This was so much the case in the betheral class, that an old lady observing a well-known judge and advocate walking together in the street, remarked to a friend as they passed by, "Dear me, Lucy, wha are thae twa *beddle-looking* bodies!" They were often great originals, and, I suspect, must have been somewhat given to convivial habits, from a remark I recollect of the late Baron Clerk Rattray, viz., that in his younger days he had hardly ever known a perfectly sober betheral. However this may have been, they were, as a class, remarkable for quaint humour, and for being shrewd observers of what was going on. I have heard of an occasion where the betheral made his wits furnish an apology for his want of sobriety. He had been sent round the parish by the minister to deliver notices at all the houses of the catechising which was to precede the preparation for receiving the communion. On his return it was quite evident that he had partaken too largely of refreshment since he had been on his expedition. The minister reproached him for this improper conduct. The betheral pleaded the pressing *hospitality* of the parishioners. The clergyman did not admit the plea, and added, "Now, John, I go through the parish, and you don't see me return fou as you have done." "Ay, minister," rejoined the betheral, with much complacency, "but then aiblins ye're no

sae popular i' the parish as me." My relative used to tell of one of these officials receiving, with much ceremony, a brother betheral from a neighbouring parish, who had come with the minister thereof about to preach for some special occasion. After service, the betheral of the stranger clergyman felt proud of the performance of the appointed duty, and said, in a triumphant tone, to his friend, "I think our minister did weel; ay, he gars the stour flee out o' the cushion." To which the other rejoined, with a calm feeling of superiority, "Stour oot o' the cushion! hout, our minister, sin' he cam wi' us, has dung the guts oot o' twa bibles." Another description I have heard of an energetic preacher more forcible than delicate — "Eh, our minister had a great power o' watter, for he grat and spat, and swat like mischeef." An obliging anonymous correspondent has sent me a story of a functionary of this class whose pride was centred not so much in the performance of the minister as of the precentor. He states, that he remembers an old beadle of the church which was called "Haddo's Hole," and sometimes the "Little Kirk," in Edinburgh, whose son occasionally officiated as precentor. He was not very well qualified for the duty, but the father had a high opinion of his son's vocal powers. In those days there was always service in the church on the Tuesday evenings; and when the father was asked on such occasions, "Who's to preach to-night?" his self-complacent reply used to be, "I divna ken wha's till preach, but

my son's for till precent." This class of functionaries were very free in their remarks upon the preaching of strangers, who used occasionally to occupy the pulpit of their church — the city betherals speaking sometimes in a most condescending manner of clergy from the provincial parishes. As, for example, a betheral of one of the large churches in Glasgow, criticising the sermon of a minister from the country who had been preaching in the city church, characterized it as "Gude coorse country wark." A betheral of one of the churches of St. Giles', Edinburgh, used to call on the family of Mr. Robert Stevenson, engineer, who was one of the elders. On one occasion they asked him, what had been the text on such a night, when none of the family had been present. The man of office, confused at the question, and unwilling to shew anything like ignorance, poured forth, "Weel, ye see, the text last day, was just entirely, sirs — yes — the text, sirs — what was it again — ou ay, just entirely, ye see it was, 'What profiteth a man if he lose the world, and gain his own soul.'" Most of such stories are usually of an old standing. A more recent one has been told me of a betheral in a royal burgh much decayed from former importance, and governed by a feeble municipality of old men who continued in office, and in fact constituted rather the shadow than the substance of a corporation. A clergyman from a distance having come to officiate in the parish church, the betheral knowing the terms on which it was

usual for the minister officiating to pray for the efficiency of the local magistracy, quietly cautioned the clergyman before service that, in regard to the town council there, it would be quite out of place for him to pray that they should be a "terror to evil doers," because, as he said, the "poor auld bodies could be nae terror to onybody." The beadle of a country parish is usually called the minister's man, and to one of these, who had gone through a long course of such parish official life, a gentleman one day remarked—"John, ye hae been sae lang about the minister's hand that I dare say ye could preach a sermon yersell now." To which John modestly replied, "Oh na, sir, I couldna preach a sermon, but maybe I could draw an inference." "Well, John," said the gentleman, humouring the quiet vanity of the beadle, "what inference could ye draw frae this text, 'a wild ass snuffeth up the wind at her pleasure?'" (Jer. ii. 24.) "Weel, sir, I wad draw this inference, he wad snuff a lang time afore he would fatten upon't." I had an anecdote from a friend of a reply from a betheral to the minister *in* church, which was quaint and amusing from the shrewd self-importance it indicated in his own acuteness. The clergyman had been annoyed during the course of his sermon by the restlessness and occasional whining of a dog, which at last began to bark outright." He looked out for the beadle, and directed him very peremptorily, "John, carry that dog out." John looked up to the pulpit,

and with a very knowing expression said, "Na, na, sir; I'se just mak him gae out on his ain four legs.' I have another story of canine misbehaviour in church. A dog was present during the service, and in the sermon the worthy minister was in the habit of speaking very loud, and, in fact, when he got warmed with his subject, of shouting almost to the top of his voice. The dog who, in the early part, had been very quiet, became quite excited, as is not uncommon with some dogs when hearing a noise, and from whinging and whining, as the speaker's voice rose loud and strong, at last began to bark and howl. The minister, naturally much annoyed at the interruption, called upon the betheral to put out the dog, who at once expressed his readiness to obey the order, but could not resist the temptation to look up to the pulpit, and to say very significantly, "Ay, ay, sir; but indeed it was yersell began it." There is a dog story connected with "Reminiscences of Glasgow" (see "Chambers' Journal," March 1855), which is full of meaning. The bowls of rum punch which so remarkably characterized the Glasgow dinners of last century and the early part of the present, it is to be feared made some of the congregation given to somnolency on the Sundays following. The members of the town-council often adopted Saturday for such meetings; accordingly, the Rev. Mr. Thom, an excellent clergyman, took occasion to mark this propensity with some acerbity. A dog had been very

troublesome, and disturbed the congregation for some time, when the minister at last gave orders to the beadle, "Take out that dog; he'd wauken a Glasgow magistrate."

It would be impossible in these reminiscences to omit the well-known and often-repeated anecdote connected with an eminent divine of our own country, whose works take a high place in our theological literature. The story to which I allude was rendered popular throughout the kingdom, some years ago, by the inimitable mode in which it was told or rather acted by the late Charles Matthews. But Matthews was wrong in the person of whom he related the humorous address. I have assurance of the parties from a friend, whose father, a distinguished clergyman in the Scottish church at the time, had accurate knowledge of the whole circumstances. The late celebrated Dr. Macknight, a learned and profound scholar and commentator, was nevertheless, as a preacher, to a great degree, heavy, unrelieved by fancy or imagination; an able writer, but a dull speaker. His colleague Dr. Henry, well known as the author of a history of England, was, on the other hand, a man of great humour, and could not resist a joke when the temptation came upon him. On one occasion when coming to church, Dr. Macknight had been caught in a shower of rain, and entered the vestry soaked with wet. Every means were used to relieve him from his discomfort; but as the time drew on for divine service he became much dis

tressed, and ejaculated over and over, "Oh, I wush that I was dry; do you think I'm dry; do you think I'm dry eneuch noo?" His jocose colleague could resist no longer, but, patting him on the shoulder, comforted him with the sly assurance, "Bide a wee, Doctor, and ye'se be dry eneuch when ye get into the pu'pit." Another quaint remark of the facetious Doctor to his more formal colleague has been preserved by friends of the family. Dr. Henry, who, with all his pleasantry and abilities, had himself as little popularity in the pulpit as his coadjutor, had been remarking to Dr. Macknight what a blessing it was that they two were colleagues in one charge, and continued dwelling on the subject so long, that Dr. M., not quite pleased at the frequent reiteration of the remark, said that it certainly was a great pleasure to himself, but he did not see what great benefit it might be to the world. "Ah," said Dr. Henry, "an it hadna been for that, there wad hae been *twa* toom[1] kirks this day." I am indebted to a gentleman, himself also a distinguished member of the Scottish church, for an authentic anecdote of this learned divine, and which occurred whilst Dr. Macknight was the minister of Maybole. One of his parishioners, a well-known humorous blacksmith of the parish, who, no doubt, thought that the Doctor's learned books were rather a waste of time and labour for a country pastor, was asked if his minister was at home. The Doctor was then busy bringing out

[1] Empty.

his laborious and valuable work, his "Harmony of the Four Gospels." "Na, he's gane to Edinburgh on a verra useless job." On being asked what this useless work might be which engaged his pastor's time and attention, he answered, "He's gane to mak four men agree wha ne'er cast out." The good-humoured and candid answer of a learned and rather long-winded preacher of the old school, always appeared to me quite charming. The good man was far from being a popular preacher, and yet he could not reduce his discourses below the hour and a half. On being asked, as a gentle hint, of their possibly needless length, if he did not feel *tired* after preaching so long, he replied, "Na, na, I'm no tired;" adding, however, with much naïveté, "But, Lord, hoo tired the fowk whiles are."

The late good, kind-hearted Dr. David Dickson was fond of telling a story of a Scottish termagant of the days before kirk-session discipline had passed away. A couple were brought before the court, and Janet, the wife, was charged with violent and undutiful conduct, and with wounding her husband, by throwing a three-legged stool at his head. The minister rebuked her conduct, and pointed out its grievous character, by explaining that just as Christ was head of his church, so the husband was head of the wife; and therefore, in assaulting *him*, she had, in fact, injured her own body. "Weel," she replied, "it's come to a fine pass gin a wife canna kame her ain head;" "Aye, but Janet," rejoined the minister,

"a three-legged stool is a thief-like bane kame to scart yer ain head wi'!"

Our object in bringing up and recording anecdotes of this kind is to elucidate the sort of humour we refer to, and to shew it as a humour of *past* times. A modern clergyman could hardly adopt the tone and manner of the older class of ministers — men not less useful and beloved, on account of their odd Scottish humour, which indeed suited their time. Could a clergyman, for instance, now come off from the trying position in which we have heard of a northern minister being placed, and by the same way through which he extricated himself with much good nature and quiet sarcasm? A young man sitting opposite to him in the front of the gallery had been up late on the previous night, and had stuffed the cards with which he had been occupied into his coat pocket. Forgetting the circumstance, he pulled out his handkerchief, and the cards all flew about. The minister simply looked at him, and remarked, "Eh man, your psalm buik has been ill bund."

Many anecdotes of pithy and facetious replies are recorded of a minister of the south, usually distinguished as "Our Watty Dunlop." On one occasion two irreverent young fellows determined, as they said, to "taigle"[1] the minister. Coming up to him in the High Street of Dumfries, they accosted him with much solemnity. "Maister Dunlop, dae ye hear the news?" "What news?" "Oh,

[1] Confound.

the deil's dead." "Is he," said Mr. Dunlop, "then I maun pray for twa faitherless bairns." On another occasion Maister Dunlop met, with characteristic humour, an attempt to play off a trick against him. It was known that he was to dine with a minister, whose manse was close to the church, so that his return home must be through the churchyard. Accordingly, some idle and mischievous youths waited for him in the dark night, and one of them came up to him, dressed as a ghost, in hopes of putting him in a fright. Watty's cool accost speedily upset the plan. "Weel, Maister Ghaist, is this a general rising, or are ye juist taking a daunder frae your grave by yersell?" I have received from a correspondent another specimen of Watty's acute rejoinders. Some years ago the celebrated Edward Irving had been lecturing at Dumfries, and a man who passed as a wag in that locality, had been to hear him. He met Watty Dunlop the following day, who said, "Weel, Willie, man, an' what do ye think of Mr. Irving?" "Oh," said Willie contemptuously, "the man's crack't." Dunlop patted him on the shoulder, with the quiet remark, "Willie, ye'll aften see a light peeping through a crack!"

An admirable story of a quiet pulpit rebuke, is traditionary in Fife, and is told of Mr. Shirra, a seceding minister, of Kirkcaldy, a man still well remembered by some of the older generation for many excellent and some eccentric qualities. A

young officer of a volunteer corps on duty in the place, very proud of his fresh uniform, had come to Mr. Shirra's church, and walked about as if looking for a seat, but in fact to shew off his dress, which he saw was attracting attention from some of the less grave members of the congregation. He came to his place, however, rather quickly, on Mr. Shirra quietly remonstrating, "O man, will ye sit doun, and we'll see your new breeks when the kirk's dune." This same Mr. Shirra was well known from his quaint, and as it were, parenthetical comments which he introduced in his reading of Scripture; as, for example, on reading from the 116th Psalm, "I said in my haste all men are liars," he quietly observed, "Indeed, Dauvid, an ye had been i' this parish ye might hae said it at your leesure."

There was something even still more pungent in the incidental remark of a good man, in the course of his sermon, who had in a country place taken to preaching out of doors in the summer afternoons. He used to collect the people as they were taking air by the side of a stream outside the village. On one occasion he had unfortunately taken his place on a bank, and fixed himself on an *ant's nest*. The active habits of those little creatures soon made the position of the intruder upon their domain very uncomfortable; and afraid that his audience might observe something of this discomfort in his manner, apologised by the remark—

"Brethren, though I hope I have the word of God in my mouth, I think the deil himself has gotten into my breeks."

There was often no doubt a sharp conflict of wits when some of these humorist ministers came into collision with members of their flocks who were *also* humorists. Of this nature is the following anecdote, which I am assured is genuine. A minister in the north was taking to task one of his hearers who was a frequent defaulter, and was reproaching him as an habitual absentee from public worship. The accused vindicated himself on the plea of a dislike to long sermons. "'Deed, man," said his reverend monitor, a little nettled at the insinuation thrown out against himself, "if ye dinna mend, ye may land yersell where ye'll no be troubled wi' mony sermons either lang or short." "Weel, aiblins sae," retorted John, "but it may na be for want o' ministers." An *answer* to Mr. Shirra himself, strongly illustrative of Scottish ready and really clever wit, and which I am assured is quite authentic, must, I think, have struck the fancy of that excellent humorist himself. When Mr. Shirra was parish minister of St. Ninian's, one of the members of the church was John Henderson or Anderson — a very decent douce shoemaker — and who left the church and joined the Independents, who had a meeting in Stirling. Some time afterwards, when Mr. Shirra met John on the road, he said, "And so, John, I understand you have become an Independent?'

"'Deed, sir," replied John, "that's true." "Oh, John," said the minister, "I'm sure you ken that a rowin' (rolling) stane gathers nae fog" (moss). "Aye," said John, "that's true too; but can ye tell me what guid the fog does to the stane?" Mr. Shirra himself afterwards became a Baptist. The wit, however, was all in favour of the minister in the following: —

Dr. Gilchrist, formerly of the East Parish of Greenock, and who died minister of the Canongate, Edinburgh, received an intimation of one of his hearers, who had been exceedingly irregular in his attendance, that he had taken seats in an Episcopal chapel. One day soon after, he met his former parishioner, who told him that he had "changed his religion." "Indeed," said the Doctor quietly, "how's that? I ne'er heard ye had ony." It was this same Dr. Gilchrist who gave the well-known quiet but forcible rebuke to a young minister whom he considered rather conceited and fond of putting forward his own doings, and who was to officiate in the Doctor's church. He explained to him the mode in which he usually conducted the service, and stated that he always finished the prayer before the sermon with the Lord's Prayer. The young minister demurred at this, and asked if he "might not introduce any other short prayer?" "Ou aye," was the Doctor's quiet reply, "gif ye can gie us ony thing *better*."

At Banchory, on Deeside, some of the criticisms

and remarks on sermons were very quaint and char acteristic. My cousin had asked the Ley's grieve what he thought of a young man's preaching, who rather imitated the ornate language than the powerful ideas of Dr. Chalmers, drily answered, "Ou, Sir Thomas, just a floorish o' the surface." But the same hearer bore this unequivocal testimony to another preacher whom he really admired. He was asked if he did not think the sermon long, "Na, I shuld nae hae thocht it lang an' I'd been sitting on thorns."

The following anecdotes, collected from different contributors, are fair samples of the quaint and original character of Scottish ways and expressions now becoming more and more matters of reminiscence: — A poor man came to his minister for the purpose of intimating his intention of being married. As he expressed, however, some doubts on the subject, and seemed to hesitate, the minister asked him if there were any doubts about his being accepted. No, that was not the difficulty; but he expressed a fear that it might not be altogether suitable, and he asked whether, if he were once married, he could not (in case of unsuitability and unhappiness) get *un*married? The clergyman assured him that it was impossible; if he married it must be for better and worse; that he could not go back upon the step. So thus instructed he went away. After a time he returned, and said he had made up his mind to try the experiment, and he came and was married. Ere

long he came back very disconsolate, and declared it would not do at all; that he was quite miserable, and begged to be unmarried. The minister assured him that was out of the question, and urged him to put away the notion of anything so absurd. The man insisted that the marriage could not hold good for the wife was waur than the deevil. The minister demurred, saying that was quite impossible. "Na," said the poor man, "the Bible tells ye that if ye resist the deil he flees frae ye, but if ye resist her she flees at ye."

A faithful minister of the gospel being one day engaged in visiting some members of his flock, came to the door of a house where his gentle tapping could not be heard for the noise of contention within. After waiting a little he opened the door, and walked in, saying, with an authoritative voice, "I should like to know who is the head of this house." "Weel, sir," said the husband and father, "if ye sit doon a wee, we'll maybe be able to tell ye, for we're just trying to settle that point."

A minister in the north returning thanks in his prayers one Sabbath for the excellent harvest, began, as usual, "O Lord, we thank thee," etc., and went on to mention its abundance, and its safe ingathering; but feeling anxious to be quite candid and scrupulously truthful, added, "all except a few fields between this and Stonehaven, not worth mentioning."

A Scotch preacher being sent to officiate one Sunday at a country parish, was accommodated at night

in the manse, in a very diminutive closet, instead of the usual best bed-room appropriated to strangers.

"Is this the bed-room?" he said, starting back in amazement.

"'Deed aye sir, this is the prophets' chalmer."

"It maun be for the *minor* prophets, then," was the quiet reply.

Elders of the kirk, no doubt, frequently partook of the original and humorous character of ministers and others, their contemporaries; and amusing scenes must have passed, and good Scotch sayings been said, where they were concerned. Dr. Chalmers used to repeat one of these sayings of an elder with great delight. The Doctor associated with the anecdote the name of Lady Glenorchy and the church which she endowed; but I am assured that the person was Lady Elizabeth Cunninghame, sister of Archibald eleventh Earl of Eglinton, and wife of Sir John Cunninghame, Bart. of Caprington, near Kilmarnock. It seems her ladyship had, for some reason, taken offence at the proceedings of the Caprington parochial authorities, and a result of which was that she ceased putting her usual liberal offering into the plate at the door. This had gone on for some time, till one of the elders, of a less forbearing character than the others, took his turn at the plate. Lady Elizabeth, as usual, passed by without a contribution, but made a formal courtesy to the elder as she passed, and sailed majestically up the aisle. The good man was determined not to let her pass so

easily. He quickly followed her up the passage, and urged the remonstrance, "My lady, gie us less o' your mainers and mair o' your siller."[1]

Of an eccentric and eloquent professor and divine of a northern Scottish university, there are numerous and extraordinary traditionary anecdotes. I have received an account of some of these anecdotes from the kind communication of an eminent Scot-

[1] Although the name of Lady Glenorchy has been erroneously associated with the above story, and with a demeanour which was quite foreign to her general character, still it is very suitable, I think, to retain my former reference to the history of this noble lady *since* her death as forming a striking illustration of the uncertainty of all earthly concerns, and as supplying a Scottish reminiscence belonging to the last seventy years. Wilhelmina Viscountess Glenorchy, during her lifetime, built and endowed a church for two ministers, who were provided with very handsome incomes. She died 17th July, 1786, and was buried on the 24th July, aged 44. Her interment took place, by her own direction, in the church she had founded, immediately in front of the pulpit; and she fixed upon that spot as a place of security and safety, where her mortal remains might rest in peace till the morning of the resurrection. But alas for the uncertainty of all earthly plans and projects for the future! — the iron road came on its reckless course, and swept the church away. The site was required for the North British Railway, which passed directly over the spot where Lady Glenorchy had been buried. Her remains were accordingly disinterred 24th December 1844; and the trustees of the church, not having yet erected a new one, deposited the body of their foundress in the vaults beneath St. John's Episcopal Church, and after resting there for fifteen years, were, in 1859, removed to the building which is now Lady Glenorchy's Church.

tish clergyman, who was himself in early days his frequent hearer. The stories told of the strange observations and allusions which he introduced into his pulpit discourses, almost surpass belief. For many reasons, they are not suitable to the nature of this publication, still less could they be tolerated in any pulpit administration now, although familiar to his contemporaries. The remarkable circumstance, however, connected with these eccentricities was, that he introduced them with the utmost gravity, and oftentimes after he had delivered them, pursued his subject with great earnestness and eloquence, as if he had said nothing uncommon. One saying of the Professor, however, *out* of the pulpit, is too good to be omitted, and may be recorded without violation of propriety. He happened to meet at the house of a lawyer, whom he considered rather a man of *sharp* practice, and for whom he had no great favour, two of his own parishioners. The lawyer jocularly and ungraciously put the question: "Doctor, these are members of your flock; may I ask, do you look upon them as white sheep or as black sheep?" "I don't know," answered the Professor drily, "whether they are black or white sheep, but I know that if they are long here they are pretty sure to be fleeced."

I cannot do better in regard to the three following anecdotes of the late Professor Gillespie of St. Andrews, than give them to my readers in the words with which Dr. Lindsay Alexander kindly communicated them to me.

"In the 'Cornhill Magazine' for March 1860, in an article on Student Life in Scotland, there is an anecdote of the late Professor Gillespie of St. Andrews, which is told in such a way as to miss the point and humour of the story. The correct version, as I have heard it from the Professor himself, is this: having employed the village carpenter to put a frame round a dial at the manse of Cults, where he was minister, he received from the man a bill to the following effect, — 'To fencing the *deil*, 5s. 6d.' 'When I paid him,' said the Professor, 'I could not help saying, John, this is rather more than I counted on; but I haven't a word to say. I get somewhere about two hundred a year for fencing the *deil*, and I'm afraid I don't do it half so effectually as you've done.'

"Whilst I am writing, another of the many stories of the learned and facetious Professor rises in my mind. There was a worthy old woman at Cults whose place in church was what is commonly called the Lateran; a kind of small gallery at the top of the pulpit steps. She was a most regular attender, but as regularly fell asleep during sermon, of which fault the preacher had sometimes audible intimation. It was observed, however, that though Janet always slept during her own pastor's discourse, she could be attentive enough when she pleased, and especially was she alert when some young preacher occupied the pulpit. A little piqued, perhaps, at this, Mr. Gillespie said to her one day, 'Janet, I think you hardly

behave very respectfully to your own minister in one respect.' 'Me, sir,' exclaimed Janet, 'I wad like to see ony man, no to say woman, by yoursel say that o' me! what can you mean, sir?' 'Weel, Janet, ye ken when I preach, you're almost always fast asleep before I've well given out my text; but when any of these young men from St. Andrews preach for me, I see you never sleep a wink. Now, that's what I call no using me as you should do.' 'Hoot, sir,' was the reply, 'is that a'? I'll sune tell you the reason o' that. When you preach, we a' ken the word o' God's safe in your hands; but when these young birkies tak' it in haun, my certie, but it tak's us a' to look after them.'[1]

"I am tempted to subjoin another. In the Humanity Class, one day, a youth who was rather fond of shewing off his powers of language, translated Hor. Od. iii., 3, 61, 62, somewhat thus: 'The fortunes of Troy renascent under sorrowful omen shall be repeated with sad catastrophe.' 'Catastrophe,' cried the Professor. 'Catastrophe, Mr. ——. that's Greek. Give us it in plain English, if you please?' Thus suddenly pulled down from his high horse, the student effected his retreat with a rather lame and impotent version. 'Now,' said the Professor, his little sharp eyes twinkling with

[1] I have abundant evidence to prove that a similar answer to that which Dr. Alexander records to have been made to Mr. Gillespie, has been given on similar occasions by others. *E. B. R.*

fun, 'that brings to my recollection what once happened to a friend of mine, a minister in the country. Being a scholarly man, he was sometimes betrayed into the use of words in the pulpit which the people were not likely to understand, but being very conscientious, he never detected himself in this, without pausing to give the meaning of the word he had used, and sometimes his extempore explanations of very fine words were a little like what we have just had from Mr. ——, rather too flat and commonplace. On one occasion, he allowed this very word 'catastrophe' to drop from him, on which he immediately added, 'that you know, my friends, means the *end* of a thing.' Next day, as he was riding through his parish, some mischievous youth succeeded in fastening a bunch of furze to his horse's tail, — a trick which, had the animal been skittish, might have exposed the worthy pastor's horsemanship to too severe a trial, but which happily had no effect whatever on the sober-minded and respectable quadruped which he bestrode. On, therefore, he quietly jogged, utterly unconscious of the addition that had been made to his horse's caudal region, until, as he was passing some cottages, he was arrested by the shrill voice of an old woman, exclaiming, 'Heh, sir! Heh, sir! there's a whun-buss at your horse's catawstrophe!'"

I have brought in the following anecdote, exactly as it appeared in the *Scotsman* of October 4, 1859,

because it introduces the name of Rev. John Skinner, of Langside, author of "Tullochgorum," "The Ewie wi' the Crooked Horn," and other excellent Scottish songs. Skinner was also a learned divine, and wrote theological works in Latin and English. He was a correspondent of Burns, and his name was "familiar as household words" to the old people of Aberdeenshire and Forfar. The anecdote I allude to was thus introduced: —

"An Omission in Dean Ramsay's 'Reminiscences.' — The late Rev. John Skinner, long Episcopal clergyman of Forfar, was first appointed to a charge in Montrose, from whence he was removed to Banff, and ultimately to Forfar. After he had left Montrose, it reached his ears that an ill-natured insinuation was circulating in Montrose that he had been induced to leave this town by the temptation of a better income and of fat pork, which, it would appear, was plentiful in the locality of his new incumbency. Indignant at such an aspersion, he wrote a letter, directed to his maligners, vindicating himself sharply from it, which he shewed to his grandfather, the well-known rev. and accomplished poet John Skinner of Langside, for his approval. The old gentleman objected to it as too lengthy, and proposed the following pithy substitute: —

'Had Skinner been of carnal mind,
As strangely ye suppose,
Or had he even been fond of swine,
He'd ne'er have left Montrose.'"

But there is an anecdote of John Skinner which should endear his memory to every generous and loving heart. On one occasion he was passing a small dissenting place of worship at the time when the congregation were engaged in singing; on passing the door — old fashioned Scottish Episcopalian as he was — he reverently took off his hat. His companion said to him, "What! do you feel so much sympathy with this Anti-Burgher congregation?" "No," said Mr. Skinner, "but I respect and love any of my fellow Christians who are engaged in singing to the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ." Well done, old Tullochgorum! thy name shall be loved and honoured by every true liberal-minded Scotsman.

On the subject of epigrams, I have received a clever impromptu of a judge's lady, produced in reply to one made by the witty Henry Erskine. At a dinner party at Lord Armadale's, when a bottle of claret was called for, port was brought in by mistake. A second time claret was sent for, and a second time the same mistake occurred. Henry Erskine addressed the host in an impromptu, which was meant as a parody on the well-known Scottish song, "My jo, Janet" —

> "Kind sir, it's for your courtesie
> When I come here to dine, sir,
> For the love ye bear to me,
> Gie me the claret wine, sir."

To which Mrs. Honeyman retorted —

"Drink the port, the claret's dear,
Erskine, Erskine;
Ye'll get fou on't, never fear,
My jo, Erskine."

Some of my younger readers may not be familiar with the epigram of John Home, author of the tragedy of "Douglas." The lines were great favourites with Sir Walter Scott, who delighted in repeating them. Home was very partial to claret, and could not bear port. He was exceedingly indignant when the government laid a tax upon claret, having previously long connived at its introduction into Scotland under very mitigated duties. He embodied his anger in the following epigram —

"Firm and erect the Caledonian stood,
Old was his mutton, and his claret good;
'Let him drink port,' an English statesman cried—
He drank the poison, and his spirit died."

There is a curious story traditionary in some families regarding a Scottish nobleman, celebrated in Scottish history, which, I am assured, is true, and farther, that it has never yet appeared in print. The story is, therefore, a Scottish reminiscence, and, as such, deserves a place here. The Earl of Lauderdale was so ill as to cause great alarm to his friends, and perplexity to his physicians. One distressing symptom was a total absence of sleep, and the medical men declared their opinion, that without sleep being induced, he could not recover. His son, a queer eccentric-looking boy, who was considered

not entirely right in his mind, but somewhat "*daft*," and who accordingly had had little attention paid to his education, was sitting under the table, and cried out, "Sen' for that preaching man frae Livingstone, for he aye sleeps in the kirk." One of the doctors thought this hint worth attending to. The experiment of "getting a minister till him" succeeded, and sleep coming on, he recovered. The Earl, out of gratitude for this benefit, took more notice of his son, paid attention to his education, and that boy became the Duke of Lauderdale, afterwards so famous or infamous in his country's history.

The following very amusing anecdote, although it belongs more properly to the division or peculiarities of Scottish dialect and phraseology, I give in the words of a correspondent who received it from the parties with whom it originated. About twenty years ago, he was paying a visit to a cousin, married to a Liverpool merchant of some standing. The husband had lately had a visit from his aged father, who formerly followed the occupation of farming in Stirlingshire, and who had probably never been out of Scotland before in his life. The son, finding his father rather *de trop* in his office, one day persuaded him to cross the ferry over the Mersey, and inspect the harvesting, then in full operation, on the Cheshire side. On landing he approached a young woman reaping with the sickle in a field of oats, when the following dialogue ensued: —

Farmer. — Lassie, are yer aits muckle bookit th' year?

Reaper. — Sir!

Farmer. — I was speiring gif yer aits are muckle bookit th' year.

Reaper (in amazement). — I really don't know what you are saying, sir.

Farmer (in equal astonishment). — Gude — safe — us, — do ye no understaan gude plain English! — are — yer — aits — muckle — bookit?

Reaper decamps to her nearest companion saying that was a madman, while he shouted in great wrath, "They were naething else than a set o' ignorant pockpuddings."

The following anecdote is highly illustrative of the thoroughly attached old family serving-man. A correspondent sends it as told to him by an old schoolfellow of Sir Walter Scott's at Fraser and Adam's class, High School.

One of the lairds of Abercairnie proposed to *go out*, on the occasion of one of the risings for the Stuarts, in the '15 or '45 — but this was not with the will of his old serving-man, who, when Abercairnie was pulling on his boots, preparing to go, overturned a kettle of boiling water upon his legs, so as to disable him from joining his friends — saying, "Tak that — Let them fecht wha like, stay ye at hame and be Laird o' Abercairnie."

A story illustrative of a union of polite courtesy, with rough and violent ebullition of temper

common in the Old Scottish character, is well known in the Lothian family. William Henry, fourth Marquis of Lothian, had for his guest at dinner an old countess to whom he wished to shew particular respect and attention.[1] After a very complimentary reception, he put on his white gloves to hand her down stairs, led her to the upper end of the table, bowed and retired to his own place. This I am assured was the usual custom with the chief lady guest by persons who themselves remember it. After all were seated, the Marquis addressed the lady, "Madam, may I have the honour and happiness of helping your ladyship to some fish?" But he got no answer, for the poor woman was deaf as a post, and did not hear him; after a pause, but still in the most courteous accents, "Madam, have I your ladyship's permission to send you some fish?" Then a little quicker, "Is your ladyship inclined to take fish?" Very quick, and rather peremptory, "Madam, do you choice fish?" At last the thunder burst, to everybody's consternation, with a loud thump on the table and stamp on the floor: "Con—found ye, will ye have any fish?" I am afraid the exclamation might have been even of a more pungent character.

A correspondent has kindly enabled me to add a reminiscence and anecdote of a type of Scottish char-

[1] This Marquis of Lothian was aid-de-camp to the Duke of Cumberland at the battle of Culloden, and sullied his character as a soldier and a nobleman by the cruelties which he exercised on the vanquished.

acter now nearly extinct, — I mean the old Scottish *military* officer, of the wars of Holland, and the Low Countries. I give them in his own words: "My father, the late Rev. Dr. Bethune, minister of Dornoch, was on friendly terms with a fine old soldier, the late Colonel Alexander Sutherland, of Calmaly and Braegrudy, in Sutherlandshire, who was Lieutenant-Colonel of the '*Local Militia*,' and who used occasionally, in his word of command, to break out with a Gaelic phrase to the men, much to the amusement of bystanders. He called his charger, a high boned not overfed animal, Cadăver — a play upon accents, for he was a good classical scholar, and fond of quoting the Latin poets. But he had no relish nor respect for the '*modern languages*,' particularly for that of our neighbours, whom he looked upon as '*hereditary*' enemies! My father and the Colonel were both politicians, as well as scholars. Reading a newspaper article in his presence one day, my father stopped short, handing the paper to him, and said, 'Colonel, here is a *French* quotation, which you can translate better than I can.' 'No, sir!' said the Colonel, 'I never learnt the language of the scoundrels!!!' The Colonel was known as 'Col. Sandy Sutherland,' and the men always called him *Colonel Sandy*. He was a splendid specimen of the hale veteran, with a stentorian voice, and the last queue I remember to have seen."

I have already referred to the communications which this little work has procured for me, from

various correspondents; in some cases from entire strangers. I now wish to introduce the kind notices I have received from Rev. Dr. Clason, of Buccleuch Free Church, Edinburgh. Dr. Clason has completely entered into my idea of recording past Scottish habits and manners, of the last fifty years. The letters he has written on the subject are so truly "Reminiscences of Scottish Life and Character," so easily and pleasantly narrated, and at the same time preserve so many curious particulars of a bygone time, that I have requested his permission to insert a great portion of his letters just as they were written. The Rev. Doctor hesitated at seeing in print what he had written merely as a private communication. But he kindly yielded to my urgent wish on the subject, and I am persuaded that my readers will feel with me, that one great charm belonging to such notes of our recollection of the past, is the unconstrained and informal manner of recalling them to oneself, and of communicating them to others. Dr. Clason's communications were contained in several letters, but I have taken the liberty of throwing them into one continued narrative, and introducing them into this portion of the volume which closes the series of reminiscences, and just before the concluding remarks upon the whole subject.

In his first letter, after expressing himself with much kindness in regard to a little work on a religious subject which I had sent to him, Dr. Clason observes, "You are certainly doing much to knit

the professing Christians of this land more closely to one another, and to draw them nearer to their great Head. You must not wonder if I regard *this* book as in some respects kindred to the other volume (the Reminiscences), which reminds us that we are the members of one old family, who, making allowance for many divisions in opinion and taste, have much in common. I am glad to observe that your volume of Reminiscences is growing in popularity, and I hope you will continue to answer the demand for repeated editions. I would remark in passing, that I wish something of the same kind were attempted for England. I have had enough of intercourse with our southern neighbours to mark the striking contrast between the English and Scotch. Take two instances. I was on one occasion an outside passenger on an English stage-coach; a fellow passenger asked the coachman, "Does this coach run on Sundays?' Answer—"Thank God, no, sir." Passenger—"That is a great loss to you." Answer—"No, sir; a man that can't earn his bread in six days, won't earn it in seven." This was good, but what would a Scotsman have said in such a case—"Weel, you can mind that when you pay me."

In the other case, I asked permission from a young woman to enter her garden, as I had no other way of seeing the outline of a new church which was in course of being built. The request was readily granted, and when I expressed my grat-

itude in warm terms, and said how much I was obliged to her, her remark was, "Most people don't think so, sir." Now, a Scotch woman would have said, "Ou ay — you are welcome to gang in, but take care no to tramp on the *Syboes*." He then proceeds with his Scottish reminiscences:—

"Perhaps, by way of introduction, I may be allowed to say a word or two of my own personal history, merely and solely for the purpose of shewing the opportunity I have had of observing the manners and habits of my countrymen.

"I was born at the Manse of Dalzell (in Clydesdale), which had been, before the Reformation, the residence of the Popish priest. No doubt it had been added to; for the priest being under the vow of celibacy did not require many rooms. A kitchen and pantry, a room above, with a brewery and cellar, seem to have been his whole accommodation, if indeed he had so much. The cellar was in more modern times turned into the dining-room, the only public room for some years after my birth in the manse, and three bed-rooms were added above, two of them very small. I am speaking of things as they were more than sixty years ago, and it certainly affords a striking contrast to things as they are at present. I am afraid that some of my Free Church brethren would not be satisfied to occupy such a house now. In the course of a few years, another public room and two bed-rooms were

added, and then we thought we had the grandest house in the kingdom. But at what a cost were they acquired! For the convenience of the parish, a church had been lately built in a new locality, but the old church remained entire. It was a small but exquisite specimen of early Gothic. The chancel roofed with flagstones, and the rest in excellent repair. The contractor was allowed to take down this edifice to build the addition to the manse, and often he said, that if he had known the work was to be so laborious he would rather have gone to the quarry for stones. I refer to these reminiscences of the old church to mark the change of times and tastes.

"Early in 1801, my father was translated to Logie, near Stirling — a county that has richer stores of proverbs and traditions than the place of my birth, and in 1815 I was ordained minister of Carmunnock, near Glasgow. Lady Stuart of Castlemilk was my patroness — a lady of singular talent and Christian worth, and withal thoroughly Scotch, who spoke Scotch, thought in Scotch, and who knew well the peculiarities of Scottish humour and character. She was indeed as a mother to the parish, and specially to the minister; and, besides better things, I learned from her many Scotch words and proverbs which I had never before heard.

"You refer to Miss Erskine of Dun. I remember meeting her and her mother at Castlemilk, and I refer to the fact as marking the easy terms on

which the gentry of former times lived with one another. We were at dinner when the carriage arrived. No matter. The ladies took off their bonnets and sat down to dinner. Some little regret was expressed that we had begun before they came, and all the answer was, 'Ou, did ye no get our letter?' Thus everything was settled, and the conversation flowed on so naturally and so genially that no one thought of inquiring after the missing letter. Lady S. expressed great contempt at the formality of modern intercourse among families. 'Invitations to dinner a fortnight or three weeks hence are foolish, for no one knows what may happen within that time;' and instances did occur which she noticed as illustrative of her remark. In some instances death, in others severe affliction, but, in spite of the reason of the thing, old rules have yielded to modern innovations.

"As I presume to use so much liberty as a correspondent, so I do not ask you nor expect that you are to take notice of all the trifles I may write.

"As you know, we Scotch ministers are characteristically fond of 'heads,' I mean, in the first instance, to write of three things—1. Birth and baptism; 2. Marriage, and ceremonies connected therewith; 3. Deaths and Funerals.

"1. *Births, etc.* — In my younger days it was the fashion for the better classes of society to intimate a birth in the family as we still do a death. In Hamilton, the announcement was made in a truly primitive

style, not by a billet, but by a verbal message, — 'Mrs. A.'s compliments to Mrs. B., and she's lichter o' a laddie or lass bairn' (as the case might be).

"There is a custom, strictly Scottish, which used to be connected with the preliminaries of the baptism service, and which may occasionally be found in the present day. A young unmarried woman takes the child to church, and she carries in her hand a slice of bread and cheese, with a pin out of the child's dress, which she is bound to give to the first male person she meets. Since I became a minister I heard of an amusing incident resulting from this custom. An English duke (his name is of no consequence) had arrived in Glasgow on a Sunday, and was wandering in the streets during the time of afternoon service. A young woman came up to him with a child in her arms, and presented a slice of bread and cheese. In vain he protested that he did not know what she meant — that he had nothing to do with her or the child — that he was an entire stranger — that he had never been in Scotland before — that he knew nothing of the usages of the Presbyterian Kirk, being of the Church of England, and that she should give the morsel to somebody else. The young woman was deaf to all his arguments, and held out authoritatively the bread and cheese. Thinking probably that the lass had not given him credit for what he said, he told her, in perfect simplicity, that he was the Duke of ——, and that he had just arrived at a hotel which he named. The answer shut his

mouth. 'Though you were the king on the throne, you maun tak that bread and cheese.'

"Public baptism was the fashion down till the middle of last century, if not later. The chronicles of Hamilton have not failed to record the fact that the Duke of Hamilton brought his children to church, like the rest. On two occasions his Grace met an honest shoemaker at the baptismal font, and at the close of the service kindly remarked to him, 'Friend, you and I have luck to meet here.' Before leaving this matter, I cannot help observing that there surely is a remarkable tendency to the old usage in our own day. When I came to Edinburgh, which is now about thirty-six years ago, no man of any consideration in society ever thought of bringing his children to church to be baptised, and, of course, many of the humbler classes followed their example. This made my work often very heavy, from the frequent paucity of ministers in this neighbourhood. But now, without any exhortation on my part, though I never concealed my opinion, the fashion is quite the other way. I am never asked to baptise children in private. What can be the cause of this change?

"2. *Marriage.* — Here I would remark, in passing, that which I quite share with you, in rendering the tribute of gratitude that is due to Mr. Chambers for his 'Domestic Annals,' and other works. I have sometimes thought, however, that he too exclusively lays to the door of the Presbyterian party those enactments which he has a right to think unduly severe.

I can have no doubt that the honest Prelatists fully sympathised with what was done by the Presbyterian brethren. In fact, 'penny weddings,' and 'lyke-wakes,' and other revelries, were as offensive to the pious portion of them as they could be to the kindred and friends who differed from them in matters of ecclesiastical polity. After the Revolution, till, I think, about 1740, there was a rule that any man who intimated a purpose of marriage should deposit with the session a certain sum — I forget the amount — before the marriage was solemnized. This was called in Carmunnock the 'consignation money;' in Logie, 'the pawn.' If there had been any too intimate antecedent connection between the contracting parties, 'the pawn' was forfeited for the benefit of the poor; if otherwise, the husband came to the kirk-session and claimed it. Thus long did a rule or law keep its place, which was established shortly after the Reformation. It is easy for us to say now, that moral influence should have been used, and not money exacted in such a case, but I daresay the good men in those sad times did not know how to make the people understand the difference between right and wrong. The 'penny weddings' were, under the colour of kindness to the young married persons, little else than an apology for scenes of riot and debauchery. They cannot be excused, as they were in the old times; and unless they had been frowned on by the Church, they would have been lasting inlets to sin and profanity. There still are occasionally-

in the country 'pay weddings,' but the change of name indicates, what is the fact, that these are very sober affairs.

"It may seem strange to say that during a ministry of nearly forty-five years I have had little trouble with what we call 'irregular marriages,' that is, marriages not celebrated according to ecclesiastical law. In one case, the parties had declared their marriage before a magistrate; in the other, they came to us (the kirk-session) to own their union. In the latter instance we made them sign a declaration that they were man and wife. Both parties were rebuked for having entered so rashly into married life. Lord Braxfield used to say that 'there was nae part of the law of Scotland that needed mair to be made out o' hale claith than the law o' marriage.' I have no doubt he was right; but it is satisfactory to know that, loose as our marriage law is, any irregularity on that head is always counted as discreditable.

"3. *Deaths and Funerals.* — You are aware that after a death, the old usage was to watch the body till the funeral. The lykewake must have had a superstitious origin, but be that as it may, it was connected with much profligacy and licentiousness. I remember being told by a servant, when very young, of the fun, and racketing, and mischief of every kind, that took place at the wakes in her early days. They were often and earnestly condemned by the Church; and as I never heard of them in any district with which I have been connected, I

thought they had entirely disappeared. But Dr. Chalmers told me that they still lingered in Fife at the time he left it, and mentioned, among other things, a feat performed by a young woman at a wake, shortly before his removal from Kilmany, of a most revolting character.

"In Hamilton, in my early days, the mode of intimating a death, and of inviting to the funeral, was this — The town-crier left the house of mourning, and, after ringing his bell at various stages, uttered the following words: 'Brethren and sisters, I let you to wit, that —— ——, whause corpse lies at ——, departed this life (then off with his hat), by the will of the Almighty (on such a day and hour). You are desired to attend his (or her) burial at next warning.' Having thus perambulated the town, he returned to the house, from which, after a reasonable time, he re-issued to ring his warning bell. The attendance at the funeral was thus made to depend on the respect in which the individual was held when alive.

"The appearance and dress of attendants at funerals shews a decided improvement in the circumstances of the working classes in our days. The manse of Dalzell, where I was born, stood beside the church-yard, and I used to remark, in those days, that at the funerals very few of the attendants had other than coloured apparel. I have no doubt that, in many cases, the nearest kindred had borrowed the mourning dress they wore.

"I never myself witnessed any excess at funerals, but that is all I can say. Our Scots chronicles tell a sad and a true story on this head for earlier days. But it is well we are mending, and that I, for one, can say that I leave the world in a better state than that in which I found it.

"I must now tell you something of the Beggars of my early years. What a different sort of people from the class (if they deserve the name) we now have among us! The older beggars were stately and self-possessed, and if not always sober, they were ever a civil race. They were neither '*Thiggers*, nor sorners, nor masterful beggars.' They got what was reasonable, and went on their way. I have before me the image of Jamie Templeton, and am saved the trouble of describing his person, for he was just another Edie Ochiltree. No sooner did he arrive at the manse (Dalzell) than he told the servant to inform her mistress that he was in the hall. Immediately an audience was granted, and a welcome given, and the gridiron was set on the fire to dress something nice. Meanwhile, he sat as an independent gentleman, jeering and bantering the servant who was cooking for his behoof. To the lady of the house he was always respectful; for he knew his place as well as others of his class. At the same time he was frank in telling his mind. For instance, 'I have just been in the big house (Dalzell House), mem, and got a glass of whisky; I would rather it had been wine.' 'Wine!

Jamie, it's enough to put wine out of fashion when the like of you speaks of it.' 'Mem, I could take a bottle of wine every day.' But Jamie was quite satisfied with his glass of beer at the manse.

"Another of the same class made no secret of his relish for strong drink. For diversion's sake he was once asked, 'John, can ye take a full glass of whisky?' Answer, '*Toot!* a glass of whisky is to me just like a flea in a coal pit.'

"There was at one time a colony of Gipsies in Minstry (parish of Logie), but the race was rapidly disappearing when we came to live in it. The truth is that they were prosecuted, or what they no doubt thought, persecuted, till they left the place. These were not of the pure begging type, and had not the uprightness of the proper breed. They had a plurality of vocations, tinkering, begging, stealing, coining, or uttering of base coin, palmestry, etc. They were no doubt pests in their day. When they took a grudge at any family, it fared ill with that house; yet they were tolerated. I believe the people were amused with them; and I have heard the country folks tell with great glee, the daring tricks of Nanny Bilson, an amazon of her clan. But neither Nanny, nor any of her kindred, ever thought of plying all the branches of their calling without reserve or exception. For instance, I never heard of their cheating the *minister*, or stealing from him. I think there was a touch of superstition that kept them from all that. To him they

came as beggars, having a kind of authority. For instance, Nanny met my father, and thus greeted him. 'O sir, I was in Logie kirk the day you were baptized, and I was in Logie kirk the day you were placed, and I must have a shilling from you.' The argument was irresistible.

"I remember an old woman of the tribe coming to a manse on the Monday after the Communion, which you know is a sort of Easter among us. I was young, and was anxious to see the issue of her visit, being gifted with an undue amount of curiosity, as may well be said. She coolly took her seat in the kitchen, and ordered the servant to bring her dinner. The servant indignantly refused. Without saying more, the bold wife took the heavy cudgel she held in her hand, and gave three alarming knocks on the floor. Enter the other servant in a flurry; 'What's wrong?'—'What's wrong? go and tell your mistress that Jenny Robertson is here, and wants her dinner.' The dinner was soon forthcoming, and when that was disposed of, another demand came from head quarters—'I want a dram.' Cook, still more indignant than before, 'A dram! you'll not get a dram, though it were to save you from choking.' No answer, but a double dose of ominous knocks on the floor. Again enters Christie, *pro secundo*. 'Tell your mistress, dame, that Jenny Robertson wants a dram.' Dram sent, and exit Jenny in triumph, after simply telling the cook, 'A' the parish kens Jenny Robertson.'

"I cannot leave the matter of the Gipsies, into which I have been insensibly beguiled, without recording an anecdote told me by my father regarding them. In this case a shoe merchant had gone to a Kippen fair to dispose of his wares. He was soon accosted by a man, who told him that if he would follow him, he would take him to a place where he would get the better part, if not the whole of his shoes disposed of. The bait took, and the worthy man soon found himself in a company, the character of which was obvious to him at first sight. They began talking in a gibberish, not one word of which he understood. He saw his case was all but desperate, but being something of a pawky Scot, did not altogether lose heart. Watching his time, he heard one of his strange associates utter the name '*Marshæle*.' Now he put in his word, by mentioning that his mother was 'a Marshall.' The effect was to him astounding. A debate arose; one man took the lead. At first he was calm and firm. Then the discussion waxed warmer: flashing eyes, clenched fists, and the hard sounds of angry gibberish. Still the leader kept his ground, and after a time gave a signal to the shoe merchant to follow him. When he was safely out of the house, he bade him 'good day;' simply adding that his name was 'Marshall.'

"You must forgive me for this melange — I began this portion without 'heads,' and a Scotch minister who does that is very apt to get into confusion. So,

without farther apology for abruptness, I must now say something of old servants. Alas! the race is nearly extinct. I know, indeed, of one who still speaks of 'our house, our horses, and our property,' but he is a rare plant. There is no longer what you have already so graphically described as the result of long service and mutual confidence. Here are some specimens which I had from Lady Stuart.

"Colonel Erskine, the father of the celebrated lawyer, and the grandfather of Dr. John Erskine of this city, no less celebrated as a divine, was quite a character in his day. You have rather a racy anecdote of him in Sir Henry Moncreiff's 'Life of Dr. J. Erskine.'[1] He had an old servant of the true

[1] The anecdote referred to by Dr. Clason, illustrative of Colonel Erskine's choleric disposition, will be found at p. 488 of Sir H. Moncreiff's "Life of his Grandson, Dr. Erskine." The Colonel, during the last ten or twelve years of his life, suffered from asthma, the attacks of which he bore with great impatience. When suffering from his complaint the magistrates of Culross, where he resided, were burning kelp on the shore immediately below his residence. Imagining that his complaint was irritated by the smoke of the kelp, he sent peremptory orders to put out the fires. The magistrates were not disposed to submit. Too much provoked to consider either their rights or his own, he resolved to extinguish the fires with his own hand. Unable to walk, he mounted his horse, and made his grandson (the subject of this narrative, who was then at his house, a youth about the age of fourteen) march before him along the steep descent of the street of Culross, with his grandfather's sword drawn in his hand — a circumstance which, to those who were afterwards acquainted with the venerable figure of Dr.

caste. On one occasion he had done something that very much displeased his master. The Colonel's wrath became quite uncontrollable, his utterance was choked, and his countenance became pale as death. The servant grew somewhat uneasy, and at last said, 'Eh! sir, maybe an aith would relieve you.'

"By the bye, Lady Stuart told me an anecdote of the early life of Dr. Erskine, which is worthy of being recorded, among lighter things. His aunt was the second wife of the lawyer, but not the mother of the Doctor. She observed that every morning the young boy came into her dressing room, and went into a closet in which sweetmeats were kept. Naturally enough her thought was that he came to pick up any thing palatable that he could find; but his visits were so regular, and he made so little noise, that her wonder was, what

Erskine, must present a very singular picture. The magistrates, not willing to acquiesce in the Colonel's encroachment on their privileges, assembled their retainers, and fairly took him and his grandson prisoners. His passion had soon sufficiently subsided to enable him to address the magistrates in the following terms:—"This is all nonsense, gentlemen, and we are all in the wrong; come along to the inn, and we shall all dine together and forget this folly." They accompanied him without hesitation. He treated them with the best dinner the nn afforded, and the afternoon was spent in perfect good humour and cordiality. On this occasion the irritability of his temper brought him into a situation sufficiently ridiculous; but as soon as the opposition which he met with gave fair play to his understanding, his passion, as usual, subsided as quickly as t had risen.

he could be about. She looked in one morning and found him on his knees, in close communion with God!

"Sir Michael S. Stuart (the '*Sir Michael*' of his day, and I suppose the great-grandfather of the present public-spirited baronet of the same name) had an old servant who had spent his life in his house. Peter was faithful, and I believe religious. When he was seized with his last illness, he sent for his master to tell him he was dying. 'Well, Peter, I am sure you are not afraid to die. You have been a faithful servant, and in every respect good.' The answer was—'Ah, Sir Michael, it's little ye ken. There are mony whaups in the raip in sinty (seventy) lang years, and the warst o't a' is that we forget them—forget our sins, but (pointing to the heavens) they are a' marked down yonder, Sir Michael.'

"By the time I came to the parish, most of the old servants at Castlemilk were gone, but there were some note-worthy in my younger days. Saunders Denholm had been servant, I believe, all his days in the house. He used to boast that but for the Bar Sinister that was on his shield, he would have been laird of Coltness. Nevertheless, he counted not a little on his pedigree, and was quite the major-domo. Like others, he had his favourites, and took care to tell them when there was anything good in the house. If a glass of water was asked for, the significant hint was given, 'we have famous beer just now.'

"Saunders, however, had his failing — the Scotch failing — and when he was in his cups was sure to quarrel with Lady Stuart. He gave up his place, and was going immediately 'to Kilbride.' No mortal could ever tell why he fixed on that place as his future residence, for he had been in no way connected with it through life. 'I'm awa' to Kilbride, my lady.' 'Very well, be quick.' 'I'm awa' to Kilbride.' 'Ou, are ye no awa' yet?' The door opens for the third time — 'Noo mind, it's a' your wyte.' 'Ou ay, it's a' my wyte.' The tears of penitence and humble confession came in the morning. The old labourers about the place would have been denied the privilege of the entré by the domestics, but, happily for them, there was a back stair that lent its influence in their favour. A gentle tap is heard at the side door, and, with permission, enters Willie Shearer. — 'Ou, my lady, I've just come to speir for you, as I heard that you had been ailing.' Willie gets a kind word and a dram. But I need not say more on this head. The gentry of the former generation lived so much at home, and in the midst of their people, that if you describe one of the genuine school you have the whole.

"I must say very little of the beadles (betherals), for I have the fear of your critics before me. It is quite true that 'cadgers maun aye be crackin' o' crusts,' but I have really very little to say of these worthies.

"From what I observed after our settlement at

Logie, it appeared that the beadle had civil as well as ecclesiastical duties assigned to him in old times. For instance, at the close of the morning service, David White stands at the top of the bell-loft stair, and intimates to the following effect: — 'Notice! Ony person gruppit[1] shearing gerse up and down Sir Robert's parks (Sir R. Abercromby's), will be poonished as far as laa' will alloo.' Such intimations were often made. At another place of worship I heard two thundering 'notices.' The second was, 'Also some of ye brack the leg o' a sheep yesterday on the Blair Hill. If ony o' ye will tell me wha did it, he will be handsomely rewarded.' I have no doubt that roups were often advertised in the same way at an earlier period; for pretty long on in last century, a market, or little fair, was held at Tullibody after church hours every Lord's day.

"The above-named 'David' was succeeded by a man who needed no civil power to bolster up his dignity. He was another P. P. His duty, he seemed to think, was to rule in all things ecclesiastical. Once installed, he got a long pole to poke up the sleepers, he rebuked any stranger minister who was late, and at last he intimated his resignation of office, on the ground that 'they had not enough of work for him.' *He was grave-digger!* To his utter amazement his resignation was immediately and indignantly accepted. Poor man! it was a mistake. He meant what he did as a first step in a process of augmenta-

[1] Detected.

tion, but was very unfortunate in the choice of his counsel.

"Positively only one more beadle anecdote. The officer who exercised this calling at Falkirk was a character in his day. In the town there lived a very notorious infidel, who gloried in profanity. On one occasion he was denouncing the absurdity of the doctrine of original sin. The betheral thought himself officially bound to put in his word, although the other was his superior. 'Mr. H., it seems to me that you needna fash yoursel' about *original* sin, for to my certain knowledge you have as much *akwal* (actual) sin as will do your business.'[1]

"I am much inclined, as I have pen in hand, to invite the attention of your correspondents to the dearth of which I have a recollection as taking place at the beginning of the present century. My reminiscences of that visitation are necessarily very slender. We were at that time living in a secluded manse on the banks of the Clyde. Our intercourse with the neighbouring villages was as nothing. We were young and thoughtless, but we could not fail to be affected by the deep seriousness of our parents at that solemn time. It was not the clamorous poor that suffered, it was the higher class, that seek their subsist-

[1] To this anecdote of good Dr. Clason's I feel disposed to add the remark, that I think it would be difficult to give an example of a more telling *personal* argument in a theological controversy.

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ence by their own exertions. I remember hearing, or rather overhearing, of a case of this kind. A very active and industrious woman shewed symptoms of being in want. Her neighbours saw *want* in her face; they watched her, and she was only detected when she was found gathering docks and such garbage on the roadside to boil for her sustenance. She was challenged, and confessed that she had not tasted anything for two days. I make no reflection. 'Tis sixty years ago,' and yet my heart swells in the remembrance of this incident.

'Scotland, with all thy faults, I love thee still.'

My mother told me afterwards that there were many whose constitutions never recovered the shock they suffered during these dreadful years. It was God's rebuke. The year 1801 brought peace and a singularly plentiful harvest, and then the land sung 'of mercy and judgment.' Older men will be able to give you far more ample and instructive materials on this matter, and I would willingly invite them to do so.

"The disgusting details of the boxing match which lately took place between Sayers and Heenan have recalled some Scottish and local reminiscences of bygone scenes connected with pugilistic encounters, in which, I need hardly say, I had no personal concern.

"Boxing matches were dying out when I entered into life. I remember two men between whom there

was a bitter feud, and it was a certain and settled thing that if they met each other at fair or market, there must be a battle. We now live in more peaceful times. But it was not so in former days, say from the beginning till the middle of last century. Then at fairs there were not only invitations to individual conflict, but the youth of adjoining parishes challenged each other to a battle with cudgels or fists.

"Thus Logie was called out—

'Hey the gutters, and how the gutters, and hey the gutters o' Logie.'

This was a reproachful allusion to the miry roads and clayey soil of the parish, as if to insinuate that the people were as soft as the soil they daily trode on.

"Douglas, Duke of Hamilton, who died about the close of last century, was a great patron of pugilism, and took pains for instructing the young men in Hamilton in the art, if so disposed. But he soon found that there was no need of any patronage of his to promote that branch of science. He brought down from London, Mendoza, a celebrated bruiser of his day, who challenged any one in the county to the conflict. The challenge was accepted by a young tenant of his Grace's, James Bocham (Beauchamp (?), of course) of Clydesmill. At the first onslaught, James knocked in all his antagonist's guards, broke two of his ribs, and having thus summarily settled the matter, he turned to the Duke and asked, 'Has your Grace ony mair o' thae Mendoza bodies.'

"I scarcely know what place to assign to the fol

lowing, as it would not come in among 'anecdotes of old servants.' A notable lady (of Edinburgh I suppose), had long been annoyed and fretted by her town servants, and being no longer able to bear their manifold tricks and malpractices, she intimated to her friends her purpose of getting an unsophisticated girl from the country, whom she could train to her mind. And she was fortunate enough in securing a young woman from a remote corner of the land, thoroughly recommended for activity, honesty, and good nature. How the process of training went on, you may judge from the following specimen. The girl having seen something very wonderful going on in the street, in a tone of *unsophisticated* familiarity, called to her mistress. 'Eh! woman, come here and see this.' 'Woman! do you presume to call me woman?' '*Ay* — if ye're no a woman, what are ye? Are ye a *Speerit?*'

"In taking a retrospect of the habits of the Scottish people, say sixty years ago, it is impossible to overlook the noxious influence that *smugglers* and *smuggling* had in the way of promoting intemperance and kindred evils. I can speak of this with some confidence, because the parish of Logie, to which allusion has so often been made, was one of the highways between the Highlands and Lowlands on which the illicit trade was carried on. A smuggler who was a total abstainer was never heard of, but much was said to the contrary of the men as a class. They sought and won

the favour and co-operation of the people to an incredible extent by the free distribution of whisky, and by their bold, adventurous character. To this we must add that, owing to the very impolitic excise laws by which the licensed distilleries were then regulated, the spirits they dealt in were so superior that the very great majority of the parishioners, it is believed, gave them encouragement by purchasing in some way or other their contraband goods. There were, however, a few who, on conscientious grounds, gave them no countenance of any kind, and there were good reasons for this. Irrespective altogether of their calling, they were a lawless race. They were bad grammarians, for they had little understanding of the difference between 'meum and tuum.' Attendance on public worship they could not give, for the Lord's day was the time of their most active work, and you can easily understand the results of bold irreligion. They were men of violence, and if not of blood in the strict sense, there is reason to apprehend that they were only kept from that by fear of the consequences. I have said that they had to a large extent the popular favour, and I could point out a village where an exciseman who had arrested a smuggler was so beset by the women of the place that he was with difficulty rescued out of their hands by the smuggler himself. I have only glanced at a strange chapter of history, leaving this and many other things to be enlarged on by other cor-

respondents. It is a strange thing that the eyes of the Legislature were never opened till the smugglers waxed so bold as to form themselves into armed bands of twenty or thirty, carrying on their calling in the light of day. Then it was that they lost all favour with the people, and soon the remedy was applied that rooted out smuggling from the parish and district.

"The demolition of the old church of Dalzell has already been alluded to, as indicating the ruthless disregard of ancient architectural remains that prevailed in our own early days. The like charge cannot be brought against the landowners of Logie. The church was old, and had become ruinous; it had never been an elegant structure, but its position was exquisitely beautiful, and it is to be regretted that the eastern window was not preserved when the main part of the fabric was demolished, not that there was anything worth notice in its tracery, but for reasons that will readily occur to any one who has been on the ground. We are in our day rather too fond of heaping reproaches on Knox and his followers, as if they alone were chargeable with the crime of demolishing cathedrals and monasteries, and as if they had spent their whole days and strength in nought but this atrocious work. It is to be hoped that the day is not far distant when the world will cease to give implicit faith to such really unfair representations. For instance, every one must regret the ruinous state of Dunblane Cathedral, and I at

one time held the antiquarian creed that this was to be ascribed to the fire and fury of the Reformation. A former minister of the parish — a man intelligent, and in every respect trustworthy, and connected with the place by hereditary ties — assured me that its dilapidated state was due to Montrose and his army, who had unroofed the fabric for the sake of the lead and timber.

"I would add here a curious reminiscence of *clerical* peculiarity. In the beginning of the present century an old minister died, who had been for nearly forty years incumbent of the parish of Logie. Many anecdotes have been told of his oddities and eccentricities, but considerations of a personal nature, of which you are aware, would have prevented me from recording any of them, even if it were consistent with the theory I have formed of the object of your work that I should do so. There can, however, be no impropriety in stating that he was a firm believer in *witchcraft*, that he was wont to tell his congregation of his controversies with the Evil One, of their frequent dialogues, detailing the substance of them. He used to describe the various orders and descriptions of evil spirits that haunted the rocks adjacent to the church. His belief in these things was so firm, that though unquestionably a pious man, they often gave him great distress.

"Any one who can look back on the state of things as they were sixty years ago cannot but congratulate himself on the happy change with respect

to intemperance which has taken place in our day among our countrymen. Of this Lord Cockburn has given us striking illustrations. A host would, I suppose, now feel somewhat affronted if any of his guests would shew symptoms of excess. How different from the old times, when such excesses were honoured, and considered a proof and mark of hospitality. Too often, alas! the father compelled his son, perhaps a boy of seventeen or eighteen, to drink, to drink 'fair,' or else incur the penalty of leaving the company. Nay, at every party there was a risk of individuals being present who had a plot on some unsuspecting victim. The practice of *toasts*, no doubt, aided such unworthy designs. It could tend to no good, perhaps the reverse, to record the many anecdotes that have been told in connection with these scenes of revelry. But something remains yet to be told of the injurious influence, in this particular, of encouraging intemperance, that the higher classes exercised over their humbler neighbours. The gentry of this country remained much at home during last century, their houses were mainly supplied with provisions of various kinds from their own tenantry or the neighbourhood, and this led to frequent adjournments to the public-house of the village. Then they were not over nice in their amusements; for instance, cock-fighting, and others even less creditable. They brought together multitudes of heedless and worthless persons, who tendered their services to the various combatants, and

the issue of the conflict ended in a carousal, in which, in a bad sense, 'the rich and the poor met together.' We must not, however, deal out to the old warm-hearted aristocracy harder measure than they deserved, for it must be owned that, irrespective of influence and example from high quarters, there was amongst our countrymen, even on the part of those who were not themselves addicted in any way to intemperance, a feeling that hard drinking was a manly attainment, and, at any rate, a disposition to regard such excesses with too much indulgence. You have yourself furnished one such instance, and many more might be added."

A correspondent kindly sends me from Aberdeenshire a humorous story, very much of the same sort as that of Colonel Erskine's servant, who considerately suggested to his master that "maybe an aith might relieve him," related above, (p. 233,) by Dr. Clason. My correspondent heard the story from the late Bishop Skinner.

It was among the experiences of his father, Bishop *John* Skinner, while making some pastoral visits in the neighbourhood of the town (Aberdeen), the Bishop took occasion to step into the cottage of two humble parishioners, a man and his wife, who cultivated a little croft. No one was within; but as the door was only on the latch, the Bishop knew that the worthy couple could not be far distant. He therefore

stepped in the direction of the out-houses, and found them both in the barn winnowing corn, in the primitive way, with "riddles," betwixt two open doors. On the Bishop making his appearance, the honest man surceased his winnowing operations, and in the gladness of his heart stepped briskly forward to welcome his pastor; but in his haste he trod upon the rim of the riddle, which rebounded with great force against one of his shins. The accident made him suddenly pull up; and, instead of completing the reception, he stood vigorously rubbing the injured limb; and, not daring in such a venerable presence to give vent to the customary strong ejaculations, kept twisting his face into all sorts of grimaces. As was natural, the Bishop went forward, uttering the usual formulas of condolence and sympathy, the patient, meanwhile, continuing his rubbings and his silent but expressive contortions. At last Janet came to the rescue; and, clapping the Bishop coaxingly on the back, said, "Noo, Bishop, jist gang ye yir waas in to the hoose, an' we'll follow fan he's had time to curse a fyllie, an' I'se warran' he'll seen be weel eneuch!"

Now, when we linger over these old stories, we seem to live at another period, and in such reminiscences we converse with a generation different from our own. Changes are still going on around us. They have been going on for some time past. The changes are less striking as society advances, and our later years have less and less alterations to remark. Probably each generation will have fewer changes to

record than the generation that preceded ; still every one who is tolerably advanced in life must feel that, comparing its beginning and its close, he has witnessed two epochs, and that he looks on a different world from one which he can remember. To elucidate this fact has been my present object, and in attempting this task I cannot but feel how trifling and unsatisfactory my remarks must seem to many who have a more enlarged and minute acquaintance with Scottish life and manners than I have. But I shall be encouraged to hope for a favourable, or at least an indulgent sentence upon these Reminiscences, if to any of my readers I shall have opened a fresh insight into the subject of social changes amongst us. Many causes have their effects upon the habits and customs of mankind, and of late years such causes have been greatly multiplied in number and activity. In many persons, and in some who have not altogether lost their national partialities, there is a general tendency to merge Scottish usages and Scottish expressions into the English forms, as being more correct and genteel. The facilities for moving, not merely from place to place in our own country, but from one country to another, the spread of knowledge and information by means of periodical publications and newspapers, and the incredibly low prices at which literary works are produced, must have great effects. Then there is the improved taste in art, which, together with literature, has been taken up by young men who, fifty, sixty, seventy years ago, or more, would have

known no such sources of interest, or, indeed, who would have looked upon them as unmanly and effeminate. When first these pursuits were taken up by our Scottish young men, they excited in the north much amazement, and, I fear, contempt, as was evinced by a laird of the old school, who, the first time he saw a young man at the pianoforte, asked, with evident disgust, "Can the creature sew ony?" evidently putting the accomplishment of playing the pianoforte and the accomplishment of the needle in the same category. The greater facility of producing books, prints, and other articles which tend to the comfort and embellishment of domestic life, must have considerable influence upon the habits and tastes of a people. I have often thought how much effect might be traced to the single circumstance of the cheap production of pianofortes. An increased facility of procuring the means of acquaintance with good works of art and literature, acts both as cause and effect. A growing and improved taste tends to stimulate the *production* of the best works of art. These, in return, foster and advance the power of forming a due *estimate* of art. In the higher department of music, for example, the cheap rate of *hearing* compositions of the first class, and of *possessing* the works of the most eminent composers, must have had influence upon thousands. The principal oratorios of Handel may be purchased for as many shillings each as they cost pounds years ago. Indeed, at that time the very names of those

immortal works were known only to a few who were skilled to appreciate their high beauties. Now associations are formed for practising and studying the choral works of the great masters. In connection, however, with this subject, I may notice here that a taste for that most interesting style of music, the pure Scottish, is in some quarters becoming a matter of reminiscence. Of reminiscence I mean so far as concerns the enthusiasm with which it was once esteemed and cultivated amongst us. I do not speak so much of the *songs* of Scotland, which can never lose their charm, although of them even some are growing fast out of the acquaintance of the younger members of society; but I refer more particularly to the reels and strathspeys, which with many Scotch persons have become nearly quite obsolete. When properly performed, it is a most animating and delightful strain — not of a refined or scientific class, but joyous and inspiriting. It has a peculiar character of its own, and requires to be performed with a particular and *spicy* dexterity of hand, whether for the bow or the keys. Accordingly, young ladies used to take lessons in it as a finish to their musical education. Such teaching would now, I fear, be treated with contempt by many of our modern fair ones. I recollect at the beginning of the present century, my eldest sister, who was a good musician of the school of Pleyel, Kozeluch, Clementi, etc., having such lessons from Nathaniel Gow, a celebrated reel and strathspey

performer. Nathaniel was the son of NEIL GOW, who was the most eminent performer and composer of the pure Scottish dance music. A correspondent, who knew Neil Gow, and was inquiring after him at his cottage the day of his death, in 1807, has kindly communicated a characteristic anecdote: — Neil was rather addicted to the whisky bottle. On walking home to Dunkeld, one night, from *Perth*, where he had been engaged, as usual, to play the violin at some ball, upon being asked, next day, how he had got home, for it was a long walk, and he was very tipsy, replied, "that he didna mind the length o' the road; it was the *breadth* o' it that he cast oot wi'!" — under the recollection of his having knocked about from side to side. At the close of the last century Neil's celebrity might be said to rival that of Burns; and Neil's strathspeys were on a par with the songs of Robby. But alas! that celebrity and popularity are becoming matters of reminiscence with the few. With the rising generation the name has passed away. It is a pity. Even still, let a good strathspey performer begin to play such tunes, for example, as "Up an' Waur them a', Willie," "Brig o' Dee," "Reel o' Tulloch," "Loch Eric Side," or "Monimusk," and every countenance brightens with animation.

We must acknowledge that the love of Scottish music used to be with some of the older generation a very *exclusive* taste, and that they had as little sympathy with the admirers of Italian strains as such

admirers could have with theirs. I have been supplied with an amusing illustration of this intolerance — A family belonging to the Scottish Border, after spending some time at Florence, had returned home, and proud of the progress they had made in music, the young ladies were anxious to shew off their accomplishments before an old confidential servant of the family, and accordingly sung to her some of their finest Italian songs which they had learned abroad. Instead, however, of paying them a compliment on their performance, she shewed what she thought of it by asking with much naïveté, "Eh, mem, do they ca' skirling like yon *singing* in foreign parts?"

There are many causes in operation to produce changes in taste, habits, and associations, amongst us. Families do not vegetate for years in one retired spot as they used to do; young men are encouraged to attain accomplishments, and to have other sources of interest than the field or the bottle. Every one knows, or may know, everything that is going on through the whole world. There is a tendency in mankind to lose all that is peculiar, and in nations to part with all that distinguishes them from each other. We hear of wonderful changes in habits and customs where change seemed impossible. In India and Turkey even, peculiarities and prejudices are fading away under the influence of time. Amongst ourselves, no doubt, one circumstance tended greatly to call forth, and, as we may say, to *develope*, the peculiar Scotch humour of which we speak — and that was the fa-

miliarity of intercourse which took place between persons in different positions of life. This extended even to an occasional interchange of words between the minister and the members of his flock during time of service. I have two anecdotes in illustration of this fact, which I have reason to believe are quite authentic. In the church of Banchory on Deeside, to which I have referred, a former minister always preached without book, and being of an absent disposition, he sometimes forgot the head of discourse on which he was engaged, and got involved in confusion. On one occasion, being desirous of recalling to his memory the division of his subject, he called out to one of his elders, a farmer on the estate of Ley, "Bush! (the name of his farm) Bush, ye're sleeping." "Na, sir, I'm no sleeping—I'm listening." "Weel then, what had I begun to say?" "O, ye were saying so and so." This was enough, and supplied the minister with the thread of his discourse; and he went on. The other anecdote related to the parish of Cumbernauld, the minister of which was, at the time referred to, noted for a very disjointed and rambling style of preaching, without method or connection. His principal heritor was the Lord Elphinstone of the time, and unfortunately the minister and the peer were not on good terms, and always ready to annoy each other by sharp sayings or otherwise. The minister on one occasion had somewhat in this spirit called upon the beadle to "wauken my Lord Elphinstone," upon which Lord E. said,

"I'm no sleeping, minister." "Indeed you were, my lord." He again disclaimed the sleeping. So as a test the preacher asked him, "What had I been saying last then?" "Oh just wauken Lord Elphinstone." "Ay, but what did I say before that?" "Indeed," retorted Lord Elphinstone, "I'll gie ye a guinea if ye'll tell that yersell, minister." We cannot imagine the *possibility* of such scenes taking place amongst us now. It seems as if all men were gradually approximating to a common type or form in their manners and views of life; oddities are sunk, prominences are rounded off, sharp features are polished, and all is becoming amongst us smooth and conventional. The remark, like the effect, is general, and extends to other countries as well as to our own. But as we have more recently had our peculiarities of dialect, oddity, and eccentricity, it becomes the more amusing to mark *our* participation in this change, because a period of fifty years shews here a greater contrast than the same period would shew in most other localities.

In my early days we all regularly attended the Established Church at Fettercairn. In the rural churches in those times a custom prevailed which I suppose has now generally gone out — at least it has done so in my country: — After the blessing had been delivered, the minister invariably turned to the heritors, who always occupied the front seats of the gallery, and made low bows to each family. Another custom I recollect: — When the text had been

given out, it was usual for the elder branches of the congregation to hand about their bibles amongst the younger members, marking the place, and calling their attention to the passage. During service another handing about was frequent amongst the seniors, and that was a circulation of the sneeshin mull or snuff-box. Indeed, I have heard of the same practice in an episcopal church, and particularly in one case of an ordination, where the bishop took his pinch of snuff and handed the mull to go round amongst the clergy assembled for the solemn occasion within the altar rails. At an earlier date than that of which I speak, a custom generally prevailed, which, however, has now become only traditionary — I mean the hour-glass affixed to the pulpit, to regulate the length of the sermon.

In the "Scotsman" newspaper of November 7, 1859, there occurs the following notice of the preservation of one of those ancient portions of church furniture — "A sand-glass for marking time having been seen in the Established Church of a parish near Perth, a gentleman residing near Dundee sent to the clergyman, requesting particulars about it, and received in reply the following account of its purpose and uses: — 'Our sand-glass is a relic of antiquity. There used to be one in every church in the olden time. Their use was to regulate the length of the long-winded orations with which the ministers of those days were wont to favour their hearers. Watches were not so common then as now; and,

as the sermons were not written, the preachers, when once set a-going, did not know when to stop without some seasonable monition. With a view to this, a sand-glass was erected on a stand in front of the precentor's desk, so as to be seen both by minister and people. When the sand ran out, the precentor, whose duty it was to attend to it, held it up in front of the minister, to let him know how the time was passing. I found our glass among some lumber, along with the tent which was used at the tent preachings or "Holy Fairs," and got it restored to its ancient position as a curiosity. The stand is rather tastefully made of thin iron plates, and I thought it a pity it should be allowed to fall aside.'"

Amongst "reminiscences" which do not extend so far back as sand-glasses, we may mention the disappearance of Trinity Church in Edinburgh, which has taken place within the last fifteen years. It was founded by Mary of Gueldres, queen of James II. of Scotland, in 1446, and liberally endowed for a provost, prebendaries, choristers, etc. It was never completed, but the portions built, viz., choir, transept, and central tower, were amongst the finest specimens of later Gothic work in Scotland. The pious founder had placed it at the east end of what was then the North Loch. Like Lady Glenorchy, she chose her own church for the resting-place of her remains as a sanctuary of safety and repose. A railway parliamentary bill, however, overrides founders' intentions and Episcopal conse-

crations. Where once stood the beautiful church of the Holy Trinity, where once the "pealing organ" and the "full voiced choir" were daily heard "in service high and anthems clear" — where for 400 years slept the ashes of a Scottish Queen, now resound the noise and turmoil of a railway station.

In our reminiscences of many *changes*, which have taken place during fifty years in Scottish manners, it might form an interesting section to record some of the peculiarities which *remain*. I mean such peculiarities as yet linger amongst us, and still mark a difference in some of our social habits from those of England. Some Scottish usages die hard, and are found here and there for the amusement of southern visitors. To give a few examples, persons still persist among us in calling the head of the family, or the host, the *landlord*, although he never charged his guests a halfpenny for the hospitality he exercises. In games, golf and curling still continue to mark the national character — cricket was long an exotic amongst us. In many of our educational institutions, however, it seems now fairly to have taken root. We continue to call our reception rooms "*public* rooms," although never used for any but domestic purposes. Military rank is attached to ladies, as we speak of Mrs. Captain Scott, Mrs. Major Smith.[1] On the occasion

[1] I am assured by a correspondent that such is the custom in some parts of England. It may be for the higher ranks of general and colonel, but I hardly think they ever speak in

of a death, we persist in sending circular notices to all the relatives, whether they know of it or not — a custom which, together with men wearing weepers at funeral solemnities, is unknown in England. Announcing a married lady's death under her maiden name must seem strange to English ears,—as, for example, we read of the demise of Jane Dixon, spouse of Thomas Morison. Scottish cookery retains its ground, and hotch-potch, minced collops, sheep's head singed, and occasionally haggis, are still marked peculiarities of the Scottish table. These social differences linger amongst us. But stronger points are worn away, eccentricities and oddities such as existed once will not do now. One does not see why eccentricity should be more developed in one age than in another, but we cannot avoid the conclusion that the day for real oddities is no more. Professors of colleges are those in whom one least expects it — grave and learned characters, and yet such *have* been in former times. We can scarcely now imagine such professors as we read of in a past generation. Take the case of no less distinguished a person than Adam Smith, author of the "Wealth of Nations," who went about the streets talking and laughing to himself in such a manner as to make the market women think he was deranged; and he told of one himself who ejaculated as he passed, "Hech sirs, and he is weel pat on,

England of Mrs. Lieutenant Munro or Mrs. Ensign Paterson, as used to be the custom in Scotch country towns, and may be so still.

too!" expressing surprise that a decided lunatic, who from his dress appeared to be a gentleman, should be permitted to walk abroad. Professors still have their crotchets like other people; but we can scarcely conceive a professor of our day coming out like Adam Smith to have fish-wives making such observations on his demeanour. Of these changes there are many which the dignified muse of history will scarcely condescend to record or notice. Perhaps some changes are better described in idle gossip like this than by the historic page; and this made me remark, as an introduction to the record of these anecdotes, that personal recollections and reminiscences might be extremely valuable in describing those lighter variations of society which do not come properly within the scope of history. For instance, the story told in Lockhart's "Life of Sir W. Scott," of the blacksmith whom Sir Walter had formerly known as a horse doctor, and whom he found at a small country town south of the Border, practising medicine with a reckless use of "laudamy and calomy," apologizing at the same time for the mischief he might do, by the assurance that it "would be lang before it made up for Flodden," most graphically describes the interest felt by Scotchmen of his rank in the incidents of their national history. A similar example has been recorded in connection with Bannockburn. Two English gentlemen visited the field of that great battle, and a country blacksmith pointed out with much intelligence the positions of the two

armies, the stone on which was fixed the Bruce's standard, etc. The gentlemen, on leaving, pressed his acceptance of a crown piece. "Na, na," replied the Scotsman, with much pride, "it has cost ye eneuch already." Such an example of self-denial on the part of a Scottish cicerone is, we fear, now entirely a "reminiscence."

In further illustration of these remarks, we may refer to the bearing of some old-fashioned language upon past national historical connections. Thus, from some words which are quite domesticated throughout Scotland, we learn how close, at one time, must have been our alliance with France, and how much influence must have been exercised upon general society by French intercourse. Scoto-Gallic words were quite differently situated from French words and phrases adopted in England. With us they proceeded from a real admixture of the two *peoples*. With us they were of the ordinary common language of the country, that was from a distant period moulded by French. In England, the educated and upper classes of late years *adopted* French words and phrases. With us, some of our French derivatives are growing obsolete as vulgar, and nearly all are passing from fashionable society. In England, we find, the French-adopted words rather receiving accessions than going out of use.

Examples of words such as we have referred to, as shewing a French influence and admixture, are familiar to many of my readers. I recollect some of

them in constant use amongst old-fashioned Scottish people, and those terms, let it be remembered, are unknown in England.

A leg of mutton was always, with old-fashioned Scotch people, a gigot (Fr. gigot).

The crystal jug or decanter in which water is placed upon the table, was a caraff (Fr. carafe).

Gooseberries were groserts, or grossarts (Fr. groseille).

Partridges were pertricks, — a word much more formed upon the French perdrix than the English partridge.

The plate on which a joint or side-dish was placed upon the table, was an ashet (Fr. assiette).

In the old streets of Edinburgh, where the houses are very high, and where the inhabitants all live in flats, before the introduction of soil-pipes there was no method of disposing of the foul water of the household, except by throwing it out of the window into the street. This operation, dangerous to those outside, was limited to certain hours, and the well-known cry which preceded the missile and warned the passenger, was gardeloo! or, as Smollet writes it, gardy loo (Fr. garde de l'eau).

Anything troublesome or irksome used to be called, Scottice, fashous (Fr. facheux, facheuse); to fash one's self (Fr. se facher).

The small cherry, both black and red, common in gardens, is in Scotland, never in England, termed gean (Fr. guigne), from Guigne, in Picardy.

The term dam-brod (see page 106 ?) arises from adopting French terms into Scottish language, as dams were the pieces with which the game of draughts was played (Fr. dames).

A bedgown, or loose female upper garment, is still in many parts of Scotland termed a jupe (Fr. jupe).

In Kincardineshire the ashes of a blacksmith's furnace had the peculiar name of smiddy-coom (Fr. écume, *i.e.*, dross).

Oil, in common Scotch, used always to be ule, —as the uley pot, or uley cruse (Fr. huile).

Every one at all advanced in life could convey some vivid impressions of his early days, and thus form for the younger generation a link between their own and a past age. As an example of such communication, I would adduce especially the early portion of Lord Cockburn's book. We have already referred to the account he gives of the ludicrous and absurd system of toasts and sentiments which sixty years ago was a necessary evil of the table. Some of these domestic customs which tyrannically, and one would think most uncomfortably, ruled society, and to which the fathers and grandfathers of many of us used to bear witness, seem now almost too strange to be believed; as for example, at a ball, the partners were never changed the whole evening. To a young lady, therefore, the first request for her hand in the dance was a very serious matter. An octogenarian friend of

mine, in good health and spirits (long may he enjoy them!) has told me of his dress at the dancing-school balls, and which mark a considerable change of costume in a lifetime. A pearl grey coat, nearly white; white waistcoat; yellow or canary shorts, with large bunches of ribbon at the knee of the same colour; blue silk stockings; pumps, with large bows of ribbon. Cocked hats then prevailed even amongst juvenile attendants. Then, again, imagine the dire necessity of drinking the health of every mortal at table every time you received a glass of wine or called for beer, and still worse, the irksome hospitality of being pressed to eat, urged to take a fresh supply of victuals when you had already eaten more than nature required, in deference to the misplaced kindness of the host or hostess, nay, perhaps, of having an additional wing of a chicken smuggled on your plate when you were for a moment looking another way.[1] I have heard old people remark that they can remember the custom of the host saluting all lady-guests on their arrival under his roof. I recollect a curious account which my mother used to give of a custom now quite obso-

[1] There is a curious illustration of this practice of pressing to eat, in Miss Mure's "Remarks on the changes of manners in my own time, 1700-1790." She explains it thus: "Nobody helped themselves at table, nor was it the fashion to eat up what was put on their plate. So that the mistress of the family might give you a full meal or not as she pleased, from whence came in the fashion of pressing the guests to eat, so far as to be disagreeable." — *Caldwell Papers*, page 259.

fete, with which the new year was ushered in at Edinburgh, during the time of her residence in the Scottish capital, soon after her marriage, which must have been at least seventy years ago. Persons provided themselves with what was called *het pint* — a mixture of hot ale, and rum, with switched eggs, sugar, and spices — with which they rushed from house to house of their acquaintances, and made them drink of it as soon as the clock had struck twelve and the new year had commenced;[1] the great thing was to force their way into bed-rooms, and assail the occupants, whether in bed or not, and force them to drink of the het pint. Another part of these new year saturnalia was to stop the ladies' sedan-chairs (which was then the constant conveyance) coming from parties; to take out the ladies and salute them, a privilege then claimed by all. I recollect hearing Miss Burnett of Monboddo (a granddaughter of Lord Monboddo) say, that before she got home on such nights her lips were sore. All this is very different from the quiet and unmarked entrance of the new year amongst us at present. It is scarcely observed by persons wishing each other a happy new year. I regret that we have not more reminiscences prepared *for the purpose* of elucidating such changes in social customs and domestic usages

1 "The lads weel kenning what is due,
Their new year gifties take —
Het pints to warm the cauldrife mou,
And buns an' succar cakes." — NICOL.

as these. Much might be done by one person who would give himself to the work; for it is curious to think how far back an attentive observer and chronicler, who has passed middle age, might retrace old forgotten ways, and bring traditional knowledge to the light. Take my own case for example. At eight years of age I was consigned to the care of my grand-uncle, who died, at the age of ninety-one, in 1806. He was born in 1715, so that I could have derived impressions from him of events one hundred and twenty-five years ago or upwards from the present time. Then take his traditionary and personal communication, and he could tell of a man and of what a man told him who had himself witnessed the execution of Charles I. This at first sight seems somewhat startling, but it will be quite evident on a moment's reflection. My uncle, at the age of fifteen, being then a younger son, was placed in a mercantile house in London; that being in the year 1730, and one of the partners being an aged man, eighty-nine years of age, would easily allow him to have been eight years old when his father took him to witness that fearful scene at Whitehall in 1649. He could have told my uncle, therefore, from personal recollection, minutiæ of details which would easily escape the pen of the historian. I would not be misunderstood as if at all implying that I had actually such an opportunity of learning traditionary Scottish customs or anecdotes from this venerable relative, because, in fact, I learnt nothing. But I mean to shew how

much of this information *might* have been gained and handed down if parties had been observant and communicative. A great deal of such knowledge has been conveyed by Sir Walter Scott through his novels. Still we desiderate more conversational traditions of personal recollection of past times.

CONCLUSION.

IN all these details regarding the changes which many now living have noticed to have taken place in our customs and habits of society in Scotland, this question must always occur to the thoughtful and serious mind, Are the changes which have been observed for *good?* Is the world a better world than that which we can remember? On some important points changes have been noticed in the upper classes of Scottish society, which unquestionably are improvements. For example, the greater attention paid to attendance upon public worship, — the disappearance of profane swearing and of excess in drinking. But then the painful questions arise, Are such beneficial changes *general* through the whole body of our countrymen? may not the vices and follies of one grade of society have found a refuge in those that are of a lower class? may not new faults have taken their place where older faults have been abandoned? Of this we are quite sure, no lover of his country can fail to entertain the anxious wish, that the change we noticed in regard to drinking and swearing were universal, and that we had some evidence of its being

extended through all classes of society. We ought certainly to feel grateful when we reflect that in many instances which we have noticed, the ways and customs of society are much improved in common sense, in decency, in delicacy, and refinement. There are certain modes of life, certain expressions, eccentricity of conduct, coarseness of speech, books, and plays, which were in vogue amongst us, even fifty or sixty years ago, which would not be tolerated in society at the present time. We cannot illustrate this in a more satisfactory manner than by reference to the acknowledgment of a very interesting and charming old lady, who died so lately as 1823. In 1821, Mrs. Keith of Ravelstone, grand-aunt of Sir Walter Scott, thus writes, in returning to him the work of a female novelist which she had borrowed from him out of curiosity, and to remind her of "auld lang syne:" "Is it not a very odd thing that I, an old woman of eighty and upwards, sitting alone, feel myself ashamed to read a book which, sixty years ago, I have heard read aloud for the amusement of large circles, consisting of the first and most creditable society in London?" There can be no doubt that at the time referred to by Mrs. Keith, "Tristram Shandy,"[1] "Tom Jones," "Hum-

[1] Sterne, in one of his letters, describes his reading "Tristram Shandy" to his wife and daughter — his daughter copying from his dictation, and Mrs. Sterne sitting by and listening whilst she worked. In the life of Sterne, it is recorded that he used to carry about in his pocket a volume of this same work, and

phrey Clinker," etc., were on the drawing-room tables of ladies whose grandchildren or great-grandchildren never saw them, or would not acknowledge it if they *had* seen them. But authors not inferior to Sterne, Fielding, or Smollett, are now popular, and who can describe the scenes of human life with as much force and humour, and yet there is nothing in their pages which need offend the taste of the most refined, or shock the feelings of the most pure. This is a change where there is also great improvement. It indicates not merely a better moral perception in authors themselves, but it is itself a homage to the improved spirit of the age. We will hope that, with an improved exterior, there is improvement in society within. If the feelings shrink from what is coarse in expression, we may hope that vice has, in some sort, lost attraction. At any rate, from what we discern around us, we hope favourably for the general improvement of mankind, and of our own beloved country in particular. If Scotland, in parting with her rich and racy dialect, her odd and eccentric characters, is to lose something in quaint humour and good stories, we will hope she may grow and strengthen in *better* things — good as those are which she loses. However this may be, I feel quite assured that the ex-

read it aloud when he went into company. Admirable reading for the church dignitary, the prebendary of York! How well adapted to the hours of social intercourse with friends! How fitted for domestic seclusion with his family!

amples which I have now given of Scottish expressions, Scottish modes and habits of life, and Scottish anecdotes, which belong in a great measure to the past, and yet which are remembered as having a place in the present century, must carry conviction that great changes have taken place in the Scottish social circle. There were some things belonging to our country which we must all have desired should be changed. There were others which we could only see changed with regret and sorrow. The hardy and simple habits of Scotsmen of many past generations,—their industry, economy, and integrity, which made them take so high a place in the estimation and the confidence of the people amongst whom they dwelt in all countries of the world. The intelligence and superior education of her mechanics and her peasantry, combined with a strict moral and religious demeanour, fully justified the praise of Burns when he described the humble, though sublime piety of the "Cottar's Saturday Night," and we can well appreciate the testimony which he bore to the hallowed power, and sacred influences of the devotional exercises of his boyhood's home, when he penned the immortal words:—

> "From scenes like these old Scotia's grandeur springs,
> That makes her loved at home, revered abroad."

These things, we hope and trust, under the Divine blessing, will never change, except to increase, and will never become a question of reminiscences for

the past. If Scotland has lost much of the quaint and original character of former lawyers, lairds, and old ladies, much of the pungent wit and dry humour of sayings in her native dialect, she can afford to sustain the loss if she gain in refinement, and lose not the more solid qualities and more valuable characteristics by which she has been distinguished. If peculiarities of former days are partially becoming obsolete, let them at least be preserved. Let our younger contemporaries, let those who are to come, know something of them from history, as we elders have known something of them from experience. The humour and the point cannot all be lost in their being recorded, although they may lose much. I still hope to see this carried on farther by others, as I am convinced great additions could be made to these reminiscences, which I have endeavoured to preserve. Changes of this nature in the habits and language of a nation are extremely interesting, and it is most desirable that we should have them recorded as well as those greater changes and revolutions which it is the more immediate object of history to enrol amongst her annals. And, whether the changes of which we are now treating mark the deterioration or improvement of manners, useful lessons and important moral conclusions may be drawn from these narratives of the past. Causes are at work which must ere long produce still greater changes, and it is impossible to foresee what will be the future picture of Scottish life, as it will probably be now becoming

every year less and less distinguished from the rest of the world. But if there shall be little to mark our national peculiarities in the time to come, we cannot be deprived of our reminiscences of the *past*. As a Scotchman I am proud of the prestige which belong to us *as* a nation. I am interested in everything which is Scottish. I consider it an honour to have been born a Scotchman; and one fair excuse I have to offer for entertaining a proud feeling on the subject, one proof I can adduce, that a Scottish lineage is considered a legitimate source of self-congratulation, and that is the fact that I never in my life knew an English or Irish family with Scottish relations, where the members did not refer with much complacency to such national connection. I cherish fondly all Scottish associations. I am grieved to see our nationality fading away. I confess to a strong feeling of regret and indignation when I see the indifference shown by the Government (whatever party be in power) towards the few memorials of that nationality that remain. Witness the condition of Edinburgh Castle, Holyrood Chapel and Palace, etc., etc., and the indifference shown at head quarters regarding their preservation and restoration. But I have done. I seem to linger over these REMINISCENCES, which now belong to a past national and social history, with mingled feelings of regret and pleasure. I have, indeed, in collecting these materials, recalled many scenes which partake of that mixed character which belongs to all the concerns of human life.

But they are at any rate Scottish materials, and as such they are our common property, and appeal to our common feelings. I should indeed be gratified could I venture to realize the hope so kindly entertained by my good friend Dr. Clason, that these idle desultory pages might in some degree be the means of uniting Scotchmen more closely in the family bond, by showing them a common ground of family interest. For myself, I think I may say, that so long as I have life and any mental energy remaining, I shall fondly dwell on Scottish names and Scottish associations that are *past;* and that, in looking onwards to *future* times, I cherish earnestly that wish for a virtuous populace which was once poured forth in the prayer of a "patriot bard:"—

> "O Scotia! my dear, my native soil!
> For whom my warmest wish to heaven is sent;
> Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil
> Be blest with health, and peace, and sweet content."

In such wishes let all unite in heart and tongue. In such feelings let our religious and political differences be forgotten. Let all the various names and forms of church government and church services merge for once into the love of country, so that every son and daughter of Caledonia shall cordially join in those beautiful words of the Scottish paraphrase, which have so often risen with acceptance from the lips of crowded congregations — whether assembled on the Sabbath day in the midst of populous cities, or in the retired pastoral districts

of the country, or in the wild glens of the Highlands: —

"O God of Bethel, by whose hand
Thy people still are fed:
Who through this weary pilgrimage
Hast all our fathers led:

"Our vows, our prayers, we now present
Before thy throne of grace:
God of our fathers! be the God
Of their succeeding race."

List of Proverbs quoted in these Reminiscences, arranged Alphabetically.

A BLATE cat maks a proud mouse, 146.
A bonny bride's sune buskit, 133.
A burnt bairn fire dreads, 132.
A dry summer ne'er made a dear peck, 134.
Ae bird i' the hand is worth twa fleeing, 132.
Ae swallow makes nae simmer, 132.
A gangang fit is aye gettin, 126.
A green Yule and a white Pays mak a fat kirk-yard, 138.
All crakes, all bears, 127.
All wald have all, all wald forgie, 126.
An air winter maks a sair winter, 139.
Anes payit never cravit, 126.
A Scots mist will weet an Englishman to the skin, 138.
A short horse is sune wispit, 133.
A' Stuarts are na sib to the king, 134.
As sure's deeth, 145.
A wilfu' man should be unco wise, 147.
A year a nurish, seven year a da, 126.
A Yule feast may be done at Pasch, 138.

Bannocks are better nor nae kind o' bread, 140.
Better a finger aff than aye waggin, 144.
Better a toom house than an ill tenant, 146.
Bluid is thicker than water, 144.
Bourd not wi' bawtie, 127.
Bread's house skailed never, 127.

Cadgers are aye cracking o' crook-saddles, 145.
Cadgers maun aye be cracking o' creels, 235.
Crabbit was and cause had, 127.

Dame, deem warily (ye watna wha wytes yersell), 127.
Do as the cow of Forfar did, tak a standing drink, 140.

Efter lang mint never dint, 127.

Faint heart ne'er wan fair lady, 132.
Fill fou and haud fou maks a stark man, 127.
Folly is a bonny dog, 140.
Fules mak feasts and wise men eat 'em, 138.

He has got his kail through the reek, 108.
He is worth na weill that may not bide na wae, 128.
He rides on the riggin o' the kirk, 143.
He rives the kirk to theik the quire, 142.
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He's not a man to ride the water wi', 143.

He that crabbs without cause, should mease without mends, 128.
He that has a meikle nose thinks ilka ane speaks o't, 147.
He that teaches himsel has a fule for his maister, 147.
He that will to Cupar maun to Cupar, 144.
His bark is waur nor his bite, 140.
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I'LL mak Cathkin's covenant with you. Let abee for let abee, 145.
Ill weeds wax weel, 132.
It is an ill cause that the lawyer thinks shame o', 147.
It's a sin to lee on the deil, 135.
It's aye guid to be ceevil, as the auld wife said when she beckit to the deevil, 136.
It's better to sup wi' a cutty than want a spune, 138.
It's ill getting the breeks aff the Highlandman, 134.
It's ill to wauken sleeping dogs, 137.
It's nae mair pity to see a woman greit, nor to see a goose go barefit, 137.

JOUK and let the jaw gang by, 146.

KAME sindle kame sair, 128.
Kamesters are aye creeshie, 128.
Keep your ain fish guts to your ain sea maws, 138.
Kindness creeps where it canna gang, 144.

LANG ere the deil dee by the dykeside, 135.

Lang mint little dint, 127.
Leal heart never leed, 143.
Let ae deil ding anither, 136.
Let alone makes mony lurden, 128.
Let him tak a spring on his ain fiddle, 142.
Let that flee stick to the wa', 143.
Like a sow playing on a trump, 143.
Lippen to me, but look to yoursell, 147.
Lookit at the moon, and lichtit in the midden, 137.

MAIR by luck than gude guiding, 143.
Mair whistle than woo, as the souter said when shearing the soo, 147.
Mak a kirk and a mill o't, 143.
Meat and mass hinders nae man, 139.
Monie a thing's made for the pennie, 144.
Mony ane speirs the gate he kens fu' weel, 146.
Mony cooks ne'er made gude kail, 132.
Mony smas mak a muckle, 132.
Mony tynes the half mark whinger (for the halfe pennie whang), 128.

NA plie is best, 128.

O TWA ills chuse the least, 132.

RAISE nae mair deils than ye are able to lay, 136.
Reavers should not be rewers, 128.
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Set a knave to grip a knave, 132.
Set a stout heart to a stey brae, 133.
She's better than she's bonny, 133.
Sokand seill is best, 129.

The Deil and the Dean begin wi' ae letter, when the Deil has the Dean, the kirk will be the better, 136.
The deil's a busy bishop in his ain diocie, 136.
The deil's aye gude to his ain, 136.
The deil's bairns hae deil's luck, 136.
The deil's gane ower Jock Wabster, 137.
The deil's nae sae ill as he's caaed, 135.
The e'ening brings a' hame, 141.
The king's errand may come the cadger's gate yet, 142.
The kirk is meikle, but ye may say mass in ae end o't, 142.
The maut is aboon the meal, 143.
The men o' the Mearns manna do mair than they may, 145.
The tod ne'er sped better than when he gaed his ain errand, 147.
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There's aye water where the stirkie drouns, 144.
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WHA will bell the cat, 139.
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Ye bried of the gouk, ye have not a rhyme but ane, 229.
Ye canna mak a silk purse o' a sow's lug, 132.
Ye fand it whar the Highlandman fand the tangs, 139.
Ye gae far about seeking the nearest, 147.
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